NEW

HISTORY of VAMPIRES

Uncovering the bloody truth behind the undead of folklore

SHOCKING TALES OF REAL-LIFE VAMPIRES INSIDE

FROM THE MAKERS OF ALL ABOUT HISTORY

ANCIENT ORIGINS ✝ VAMPIRES AROUND THE WORLD ✝ MYTH VS REALITY

Digital Edition

FUTURE

SIXTH EDITION

WELCOME TO

HISTORY of VAMPIRES

The idea that undead beings return to feast upon the living has fascinated cultures and generations for centuries, with different parts of the world sharing their own unique tales of folklore, and with theories evolving as science and medicine have advanced. The characteristics of vampires have always differed from country to country, as well as how they are created, how they are identified, and how ordinary folk can protect themselves against vampires and even destroy them – should they be brave enough. In History of Vampires, uncover the remarkable origins of vampiric beliefs, and examine traditions from around the world, from gruesome tales of blood-drinking Romanian vampires to the Filipino creature that feasts on unborn children. Meet 'real-life' vampires, such as Vlad the Impaler and Elizabeth Báthory, and learn about cases from the 19th-century New England Vampire Panic, as well as 20th-century killers. We also explore how the vampires of popular culture contrast to those of folklore and analyse the influences and inspirations in literature and on screen. With all this and much more to sink your teeth into, this is the ultimate companion for anyone with a thirst for vampire knowledge.

FUTURE

HISTORY of VAMPIRES

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Printed in the UK

Distributed by Marketforce – www.marketforce.co.uk
For enquiries, please email: mfcommunications@futurenet.com

History of Vampires Sixth Edition (AHB6233)
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Future plc is a public
company quoted on the
London Stock Exchange
(symbol: FUTR)
www.futureplc.com

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ALL ABOUT HISTORY
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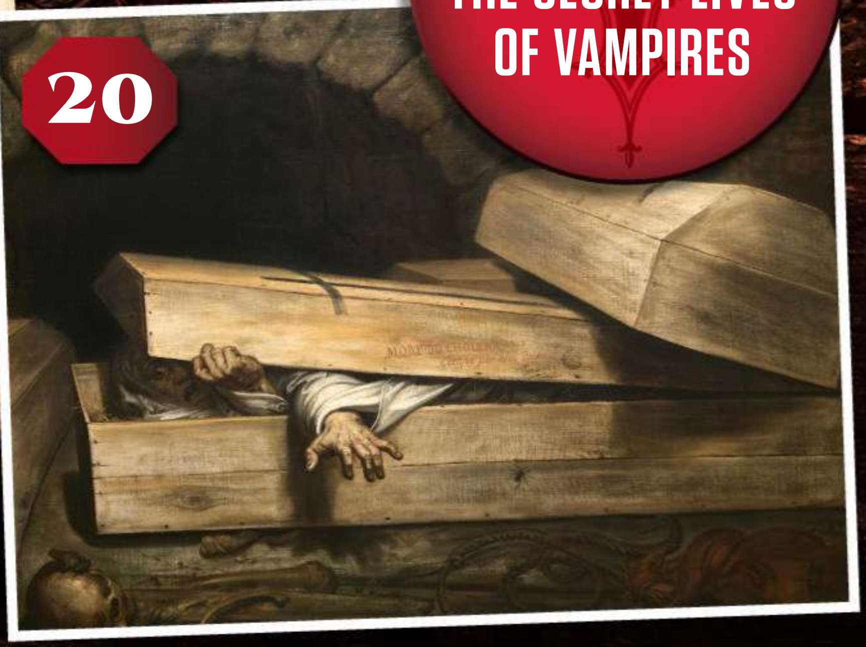
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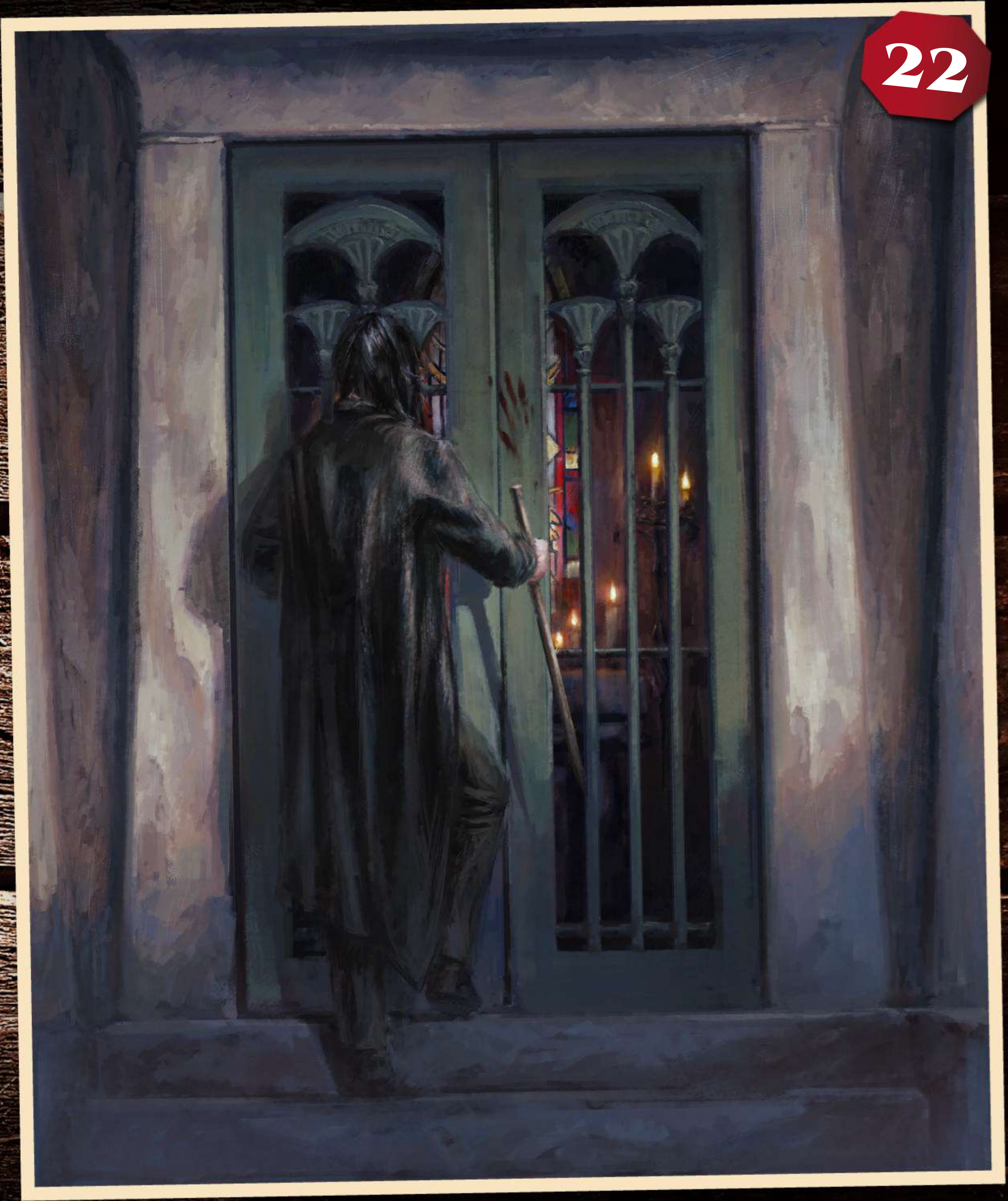
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The origins of vampires

Vampires were not always characters contained to stories, but horrifying spectres that would terrorise villages and drive people to insanity

Words by **Frances White**

The moon is full and high, a crack of light dances across a pitch-black sky, and in the distance a crow caws. In a rundown alley off a moonlit street a shadow passes, his high-collared cloak wafting at his feet, as if he were hovering above the ground. As the lightning cracks overhead, a glimpse of his face can be seen: pale-white skin, raven-black hair and an unnatural, hypnotising beauty. Most unusual of all, however, are his teeth, which are sharp, as if filed to a point. Another crack of lightning, and the figure is gone; vanished, without a trace, as if he had never been there at all. As the storm rages, above the houses a single black bat can be seen, powering through the rain into the growing night.

This classic image of a vampire is one that is recognisable to almost anyone alive today. It is a concept of vampires that has been popularised by writers such as Bram Stoker, and entered the cultural conscious to such a degree, that one does not even need to name a fanged being for readers to know what it is. Vampires are everywhere – they are the stars of books, TV shows, movies and games. The idea of undead beings who return to feast upon the living has entertained and fascinated humanity for years. However, vampires were not always characters to entertain and enthral, but in fact very real threats to the people who feared them. Before the characters and the glamour of vampires there was the terror. This terror drove people to unearth the dead, flee their homes and mutilate the bodies of their loved ones. Today, vampires may be regarded as stylish and alluring, but the origins of these beings are far more sinister.

© Ian Hinley

Melrose Abbey was largely rebuilt after medieval wars ravaged its exterior

The Hunderprest vampire of Melrose Abbey

This zombie priest returned at night to haunt the living

Once a wealthy and prosperous monastery, Melrose Abbey is home to one of the creepiest vampire legends, certainly in Scotland. In 1139, there was a chaplain to one of the ladies who lived nearby. This chaplain was known to revel in a wide array of sins and vices, even earning himself the nickname 'Hunderprest', meaning 'dog priest'. He was given this title apparently due to his fondness for hunting with a pack of wild hounds. It is believed that when the priest died, he paid for his sinful life by being cursed to return as a revenant, or vampire. There were sightings of the priest stalking the streets, searching for blood and terrifying the locals. It was said he would return to the abbey in the dead of night in the form of a bat. The monks at the abbey were reportedly able to drive the vampire away with prayers and rituals; however, this simply drove the priest into the house of his old mistress, who he bothered for sex. Terrified, she called upon the help of the monks, hoping an exorcism would help.

In order to finally rid themselves of this sinful demon once and for all, an elder monk travelled to the priest's grave where he reportedly witnessed the man rise out of the ground and approach him. The monk fought him off with a staff, and drove the phantom back into the ground. Now confident he was dealing with a vampire, the monk and some companions opened up the grave the following morning. Inside they found the priest's body, a smile upon his lips, dripping with blood. The monks removed the body, burned it to ashes, and scattered the ashes into the wind. The monks were satisfied that the demon was dealt with and things began to calm down. However, today it is said that on some nights ghostly howls can still be heard throughout the ruins of the abbey.

Although the word 'vampire' did not appear in the English language until 1734, the idea of blood-sucking, energy-consuming beings has existed since ancient times. One of the earliest examples of beings that resembled what we know as vampires today was from ancient Sumer and Babylonia in 4,000 BCE. The ekimmu were a kind of vengeful spirit of the recently deceased, returned from the dead to consume the life-force of the living.

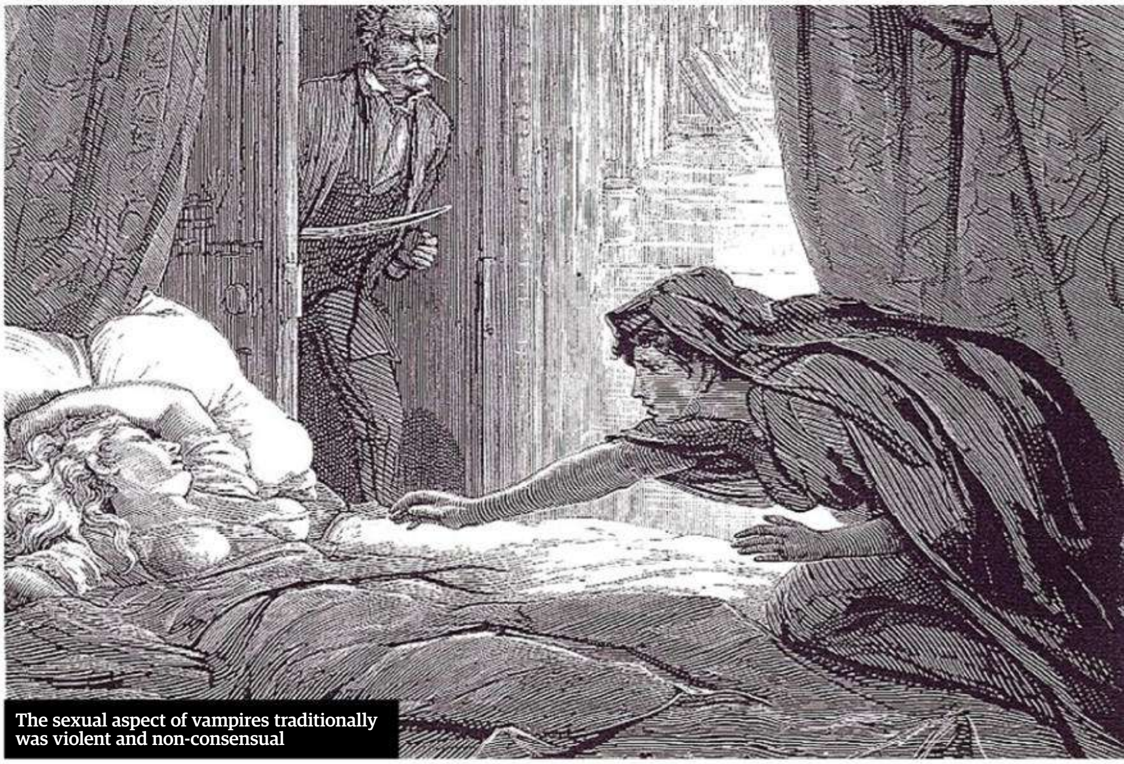
Tales of creatures that return from the dead to consume the blood or flesh of those still alive appear in an alarming number of cultures all around the world. Although the term 'vampire' was not used, these demons, strongly associated with the devil, can be linked with the modern-day vampire that drinks the blood of its victims. India had the vetalas, ghouls that inhabit corpses and the pisaca, the spirits of people who died in insanity. Persian history is littered with tales of blood-drinking demons, Assyria told stories of Lilitu, who sustained her hunger with the blood of babies, and estries were female beings, able to change their shape to roam the night and seek out their victims.

The Greco-Roman world further built on this idea of blood-drinking demons with Empusa, a demonic child of the goddess Hecate who seduced men and feasted on their blood, a far more similar example to the vampires of pop culture today. The striges were described as feasting on children and adults alike, and took on the appearance of crows, an early example of the now-famous vampire link to animals.

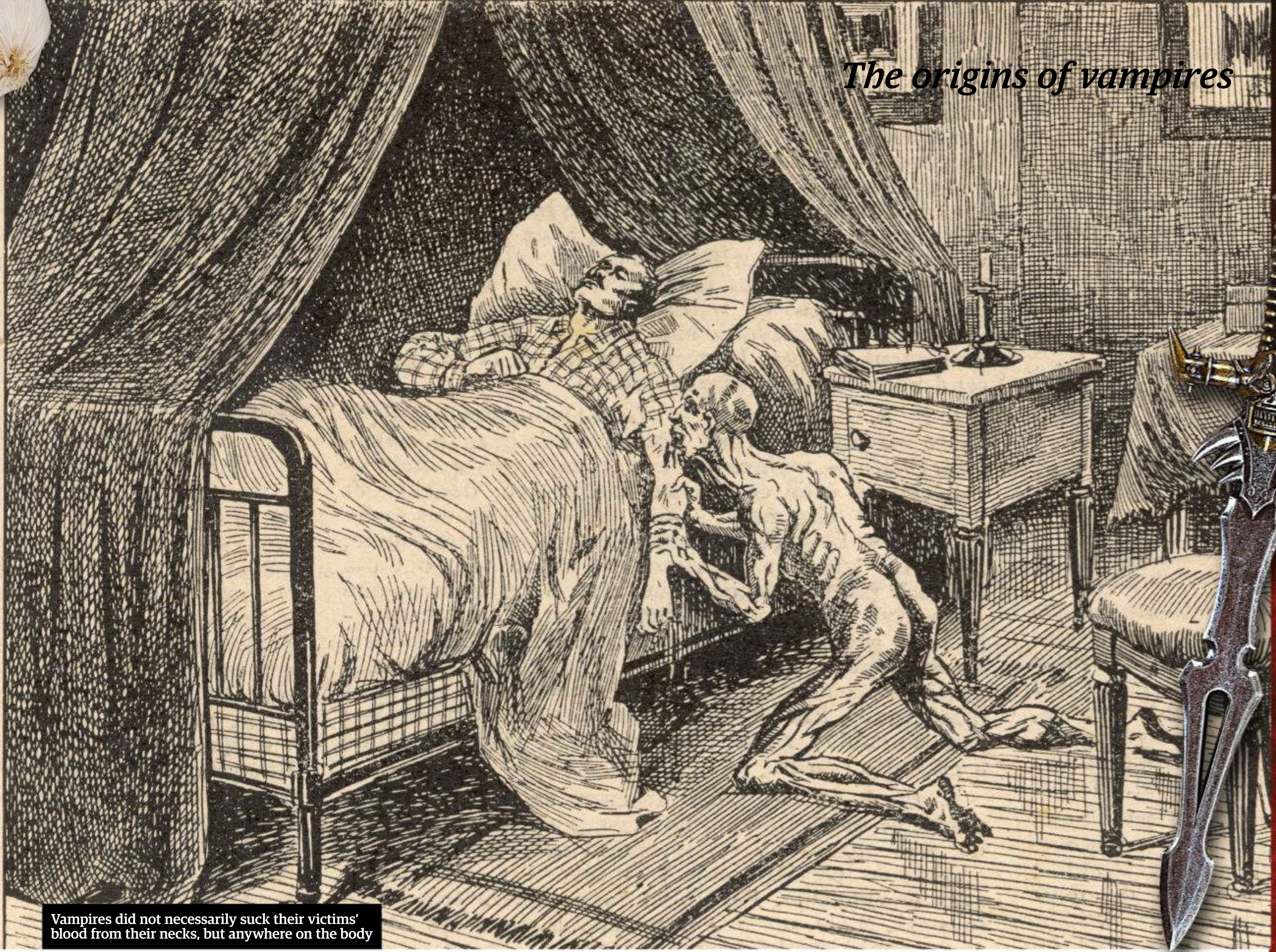
However, it wasn't until the medieval period that some of the most prominent myths and stories surrounding vampires as we know them today began. In the 12th century, English historians Walter Map and William of Newburgh recorded accounts of revenants, animated undead corpses to haunt the living. Unlike vampires, revenants were said to be in advanced states of decay, with fiery, red eyes, reeking of rotting flesh and dressed in burial shrouds. Revenants were known to spread disease among the living and could only be defeated by decapitation, burning and removing the heart. Newburgh noted that stories of revenants were so common he wouldn't have the time to record every instance. In one of his accounts, a husband returned from the dead to visit his family and neighbours, becoming "a serious nuisance." These nocturnal visits are similar to later accounts of vampires.

> If a nun made the mistake of stepping over an unburied body, legend dictated she would turn into a vampire

> "These demons, strongly associated with the devil, can be linked with the modern-day vampire that drinks the blood of its victims"



The sexual aspect of vampires traditionally was violent and non-consensual



Vampires did not necessarily suck their victims' blood from their necks, but anywhere on the body

A feature of Old Norse tales is that of the draugr, undead beings capable of bringing bodies back to life. These shuffling beasts could be defeated with fire or dismemberment – a key feature of vampire legend. These draugr would also reside in their graves, and it was often said that a corpse of a mean or greedy person would become a draugr. However, similar to vampires, more draugr could be created via infection by another draugr. The means of preventing draugrs are also remarkably similar to later means against vampires, such as placing iron scissors on their chest, or putting straw or twigs among the body.

In the late 17th and 18th centuries, the vampire legends we know today really began to take form. These tales of vampire torment entered Germany and England where they were transformed, widely told and popularised. However, it was actually from Croatia that one of the earliest sightings of vampire activity was recorded.

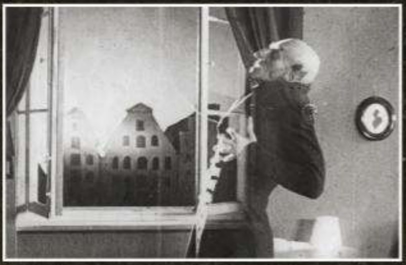
In 1672, panic swept through the small village of Kringa, as villagers witnessed a deceased man, Jure Grando, return from the dead. Apparently Jure had been dead for 16 years before his 'resurrection'. He was reported to be hounding the villagers, knocking on doors around the village. The houses on which he knocked would experience a death in the following days. He was also reported to have consumed blood and sexually harassed his widow. When his grave was unearthed, the villagers found the corpse inside, perfectly preserved. The classic vampire-defeating technique was employed – to drive a stake through his chest, but it simply bounced off. With no other option, one of the villagers decapitated him. This act apparently awakened the 'vampire' who screamed, and then was never heard from again. Today, Jure Grando is believed to be the first person ever described using the term 'vampire' in historical records. If there truly is a vampire grand master, Grando would wear that crown.

If there was ever a time and place for vampire sightings, it was Eastern Europe in the 18th century. A vampire frenzy swept over the continent, and digging up graves and staking the corpses within became a frequent activity. This frenzy was not contained to just an eccentric few; in fact, even government officials joined in the hunt. It is interesting to note that this vampire frenzy occurred during the Age of Enlightenment, a period when science and fact was being promoted as opposed to fiction and myth, an era when most folklore legends were being disproved or quietened, but vampire sightings were on the rise, and mass hysteria surrounding them soon followed. East Prussia experienced an outbreak of vampire attacks in 1721, and these attacks rapidly spread to nearby localities. Some of the most famous early vampire cases originated from this era, and the first to be officially recorded were that of Petar Blagojevich and Sava Savanović from Serbia.

Blagojevich was a Serbian peasant who had died in 1725. His death was apparently followed by a series of similar deaths – nine over the space of eight days. These victims would reportedly claim that they had been attacked by Blagojevich. Common in vampire stories, Blagojevich's wife also claimed she had been visited by her husband. It was reported that he had asked his son for food and upon refusing, the son was found dead the next day with his blood drained. The villagers were so alarmed by this tale that they feared the entire community would be killed, and threatened to abandon the village if nothing was done. The body was opened by officials and found to be undecomposed, with hair and nails growing and with blood in the mouth. The body was staked through the heart by the terrified inhabitants,

6 signs to spot a true vampire

When a village was terrorised by a suspected vampire, these were the key characteristics they knew to look out for



1 Undecomposed corpse

The common perception of vampires as thin, pale and skeletal is a modern one. In folklore, vampires were actually plump, showed few signs of decomposition, and after feasting would become bloated with the blood of their victims. However, far from the alluring, smartly dressed vampires of popular fiction, folklore vampires were a hideous site to behold on a dark night. A true vampire would be more likely to disgust and alarm, than to woo.

2 Avid shape-shifter

When watching for a vampire, you may be looking for bats, as the animal most strongly associated with the modern-day being; however, you may be looking for the wrong animal. Traditionally, a vampire could shape-shift into any animal of its choosing, not just bats. It made more sense for a vampire to shape-shift into a common animal such as a dog, wolf or cat. There are accounts of vampires shape-shifting into sheep, horses, snakes and even moths.

3 Unstoppable being

A common mistake when identifying a true vampire is that they cannot be seen during the day. However, this aversion or weakness to sunlight actually wasn't really a major characteristic of vampires until *Nosferatu* in 1922. Historically, sunlight has never been a deterrent for vampires, so seeing one during the day isn't a sign that they're not a vampire. But vampires do gain more power at night, and it is then they are at their most dangerous.

4 Bloodlust

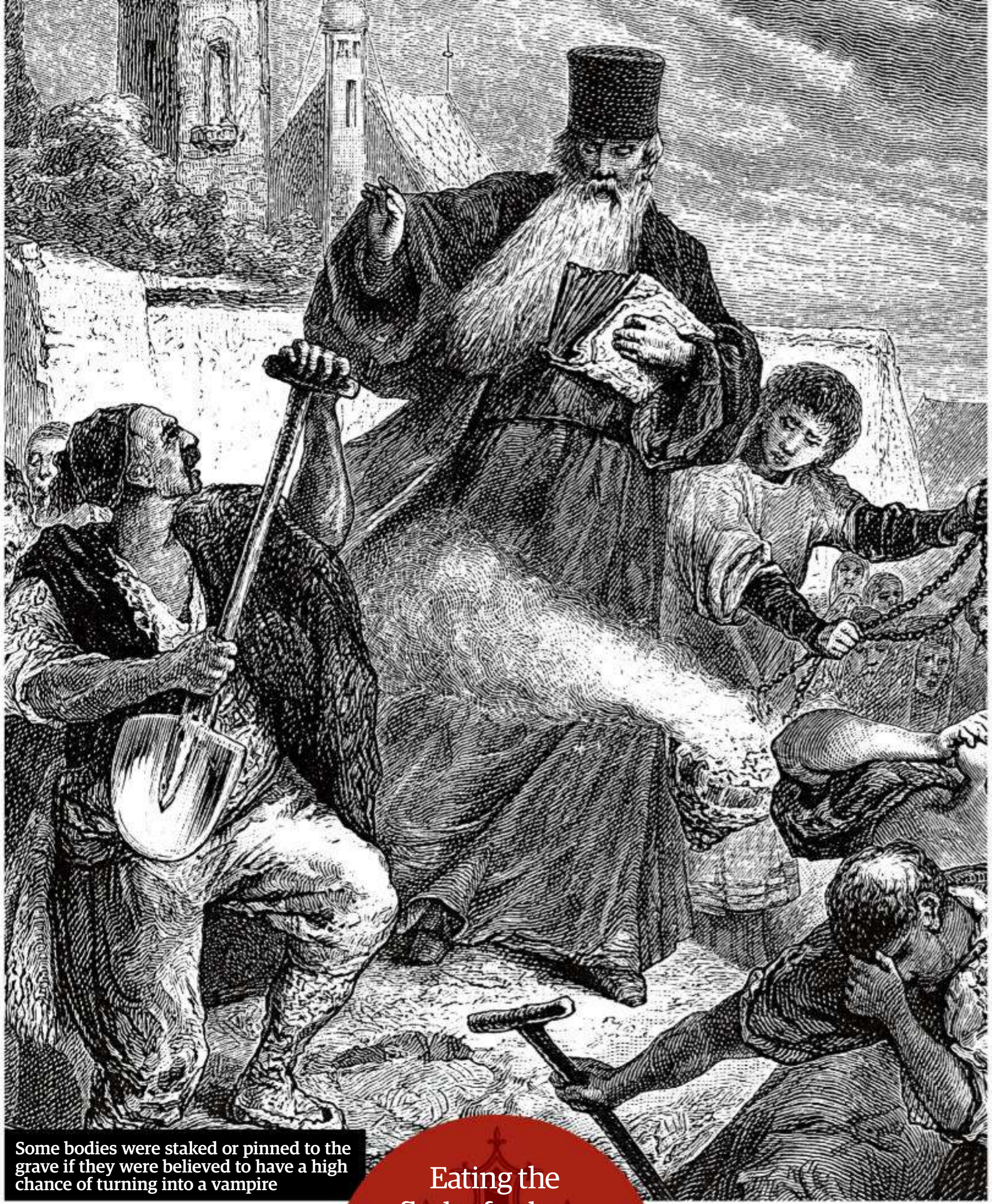
One of the key characteristics of the medieval vampire was an absolute bloodlust. Vampires were not suave or cunning, but rather brought death and ruin wherever they went. Traditionally, vampires would first visit the families they had in life, and it was extremely common for the first victim to be the vampire's spouse. Family members would change their appearances in an effort to hide from their returned loved ones.

5 Grave-dwellers

Although coffins are still associated with vampires today, a true vampire resides not only in its coffin, but also in the earth in which the person was buried. Graves were historically so strongly associated with vampires that corpses were buried face-down so that when the vampire awoke, it would burrow downwards instead of reaching the surface. A recently unearthed grave, or a grave found empty in the night was a surefire sign of suspicious, vampire-like activity.

6 Sensitivity to items

A more definite way to determine if a being were a vampire was to use an apotropaic, an item used to ward off evil. Classically, vampires were averse to garlic but also a branch of a wild rose, a hawthorn plant, and even mustard seeds, placed on the roof of a house. It was also believed that vampires were unable to walk on consecrated ground and, as beings of the devil, had an aversion to holy items associated with God: rosary beads, crucifixes or holy water.



Some bodies were staked or pinned to the grave if they were believed to have a high chance of turning into a vampire

who then went on to burn the remains. In official reports, the villagers are said to have been beside themselves with fear. Whether it really was Blagojevich or not, something had stricken terror into the villagers, and the widely published report contributed to the vampire craze gripping the continent.

> Eating the flesh of a sheep that had been killed by a wolf was believed to doom someone to soon become a vampire

Perhaps the most famous vampire to come from Serbia was Sava Savanović, who was said to reside within an old watermill, and would kill and drink the blood of the millers who came to water their grain. Although Petar may have been the first vampire recorded, Savanović was undoubtedly the first to become a kind of pop-culture icon, featured in books and even horror films.

These tales of vampire activity travelled quickly across the continent, particularly due to how well-documented they were. Government officials were involved in the hunting of the vampires, wrote case reports, and even published books that were quickly consumed throughout Europe. Once the continent was gripped by vampire fever, it didn't let go, with the '18th-Century Vampire Controversy' raging for an entire generation. In 18th-century Europe, vampires were not a joke, not even a bogeyman created to scare children. To the people in these (often-rural) villages, they were a very real threat, one that drove them to unnatural, unthinkable lengths, such as digging up and mutilating corpses to stop them being terrorised.

With this ever-growing fear of vampires, a mythos of belief soon bloomed and blossomed. The terror surrounding these beings was so great that an array of causes were believed to be involved in the creation of a vampire, ranging from the horrifying to the bizarre. It was believed that vampires could be created if the deceased was once a werewolf (which involved an entirely different myth), if babies were born with teeth, or even if bodies had a cat jump on them before being buried. A bat flying over a corpse was believed to be another cause. Just being the seventh son of a seventh son could doom you, and so could reflecting a dead body in a mirror, or even simply having red hair. However, one of the most common beliefs surrounding vampires was that they were somehow immoral in their life. Examples of these

Killing a vampire with a stake through the heart has remained a popular method into modern times

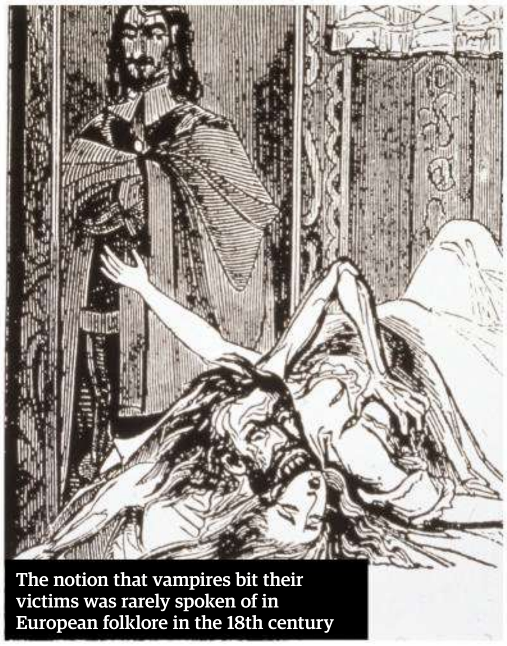
Undead man's deadly curse

How one man brought the curse of a vampire with him to a small village

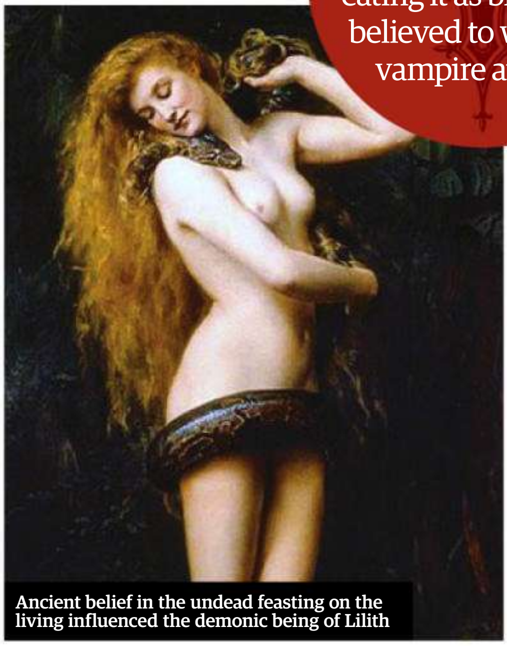
Another Serbian vampire case that became infamous due to the authorities confirming the existence of vampires was that of Arnold Paole. Paole was a peasant who moved to the village of Medveđa. He was known to speak about how he had previously been plagued by a vampire, but cured himself by consuming dirt from the vampire's grave and smearing himself with blood. However, in 1725 he fell and broke his neck, dying instantly. Approximately a month after his death, multiple people complained that Paole had returned and was terrorising them, and just days after reporting this, these people died. After remembering that Paole had claimed he had been in contact with a vampire before, a decision was made by the authorities to open his grave. Inside they found the body, undecomposed with fresh blood flowing from the cavities. Nails had fallen off his body, but grown again, along with his hair. Drawing the conclusion that Paole was indeed a vampire, the authorities ordered that a stake be driven through his heart. This action apparently caused him to emit a shriek, and a groan. After this, they cut off his head and burnt the whole body. This procedure was repeated on his supposed victims to hopefully put an end to the vampire curse once and for all.

People in 18th-century Europe would dig up corpses

The notion of vampires living in castles was entirely absent in historical folklore, where vampires resided exclusively in their graves



The notion that vampires bit their victims was rarely spoken of in European folklore in the 18th century



Ancient belief in the undead feasting on the living influenced the demonic being of Lilith

Mixing flour with the blood of a slain vampire and eating it as bread was believed to ward off vampire attacks

'sins' that could turn a corpse into a vampire were: practising sorcery, being an illegitimate child of illegitimate parents, someone who had been excommunicated from the Church, suicidal death, and especially those buried improperly. Surprisingly, the popular vampire creation method today, that of a bite, was rarely spoken of in European folklore at the time.

The fear of vampires was so ingrained that cultural practices were developed and employed to stop the newly dead transforming into the beasts. The most popular method was burying a corpse upside down, but objects connected to the earth such as scythes or sickles used in farming were also placed near the grave. Apparently these would satisfy the demons inhabiting the bodies, preventing them from breaking out of their graves. Another distraction technique employed was to spread poppy seeds or sand on the ground by the

Large stones could also be placed on graves to prevent the undead escaping, such as this ninth-century Danish example

> "Vampire transformation was not always immediate… a victim could be attacked by a vampire and waste away over days"

grave, which would keep the vampire occupied with counting the grains all night. Supposedly this fed on the belief that vampires suffered from arithmomania, an obsessive need to count the objects surrounding them. A more direct method from stopping the dead roaming among the living was to sever the tendons at the knees.

A corpse that was believed to be a vampire was described as not decomposing, and generally looked as he/she did in life. Another sure sign of a vampire stalking a neighbourhood was an increased rate of death, not just humans but cattle, sheep and even domestic pets. Vampire transformation was not always immediate, but instead a victim could be attacked by a vampire and waste away over a period of days or weeks. In some folklore, it was believed that vampires were capable of poltergeist-like activity such as throwing stones, moving objects or pressing down on people as they slept. A common feature that appeared time and time again in vampire reports was that the vampire would visit their spouse, sometimes to kill them, and in some legends the vampire would engage in sexual activity, which could even lead to pregnancy. The resulting child, rather than being a vampire themselves was believed to have the power to slay vampires. This belief provided a rather convenient reason why widows, expected to remain celibate, could become pregnant.

The belief in vampires was so widespread across the world, with differing cultures and societies all having different but similar tales of these supernatural beings that experts have been arguing for decades over what the true origins and reasons behind this hysteria were. The theories are wide and differing, but all demonstrate just how integrated into society these fears had become.

One explanation for the widespread belief in vampires was that it was a way for people from the pre-industrialised era to explain the process of death and decomposition. One of the most common traits with the tales of folklore vampires is the lack of decomposition after death. However, the rate of decomposition is reliant on a large number of factors including temperature and even soil composition. Also, although it may seem that hair and fingernails continue to grow after death, another vampire calling card, this is actually a kind of optical illusion due to the skin of the body shrinking, exposing nails and skin previously hidden. Another key trait of traditional vampires was the swollen, bloated body, and the blood that was often described as oozing from the mouth. These are also all forms of decomposition. Corpses are known to swell with gas after death, and the pressure from this can force blood out of the mouth and nose. This process creates the plump or 'ruddy' complexion often described in vampire folklore. There is even evidence that bodies can 'groan' after death due to gas passing through vocal cords, undoubtedly highly alarming to 18th-century gravediggers, but a natural part of the body's decomposition process.

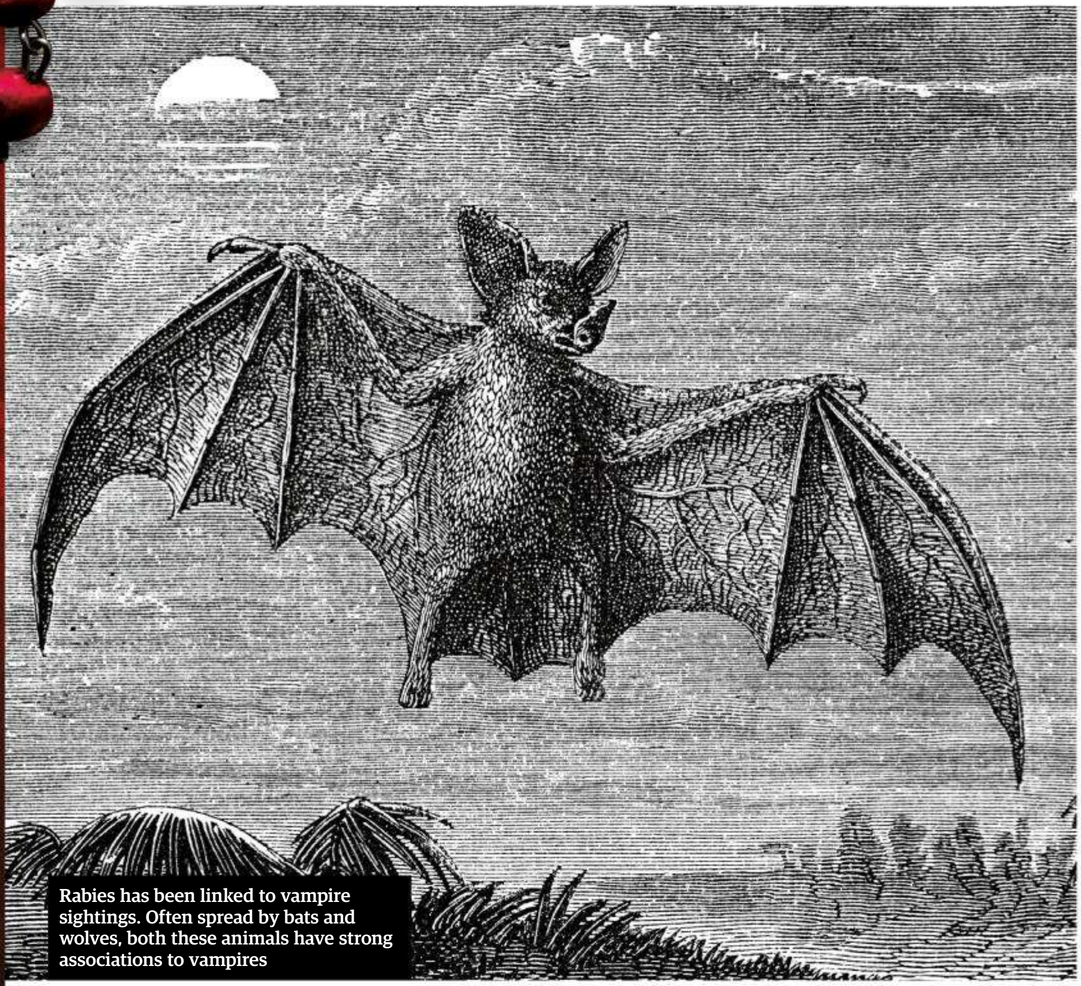
A more chilling explanation for belief in vampires was that, due to limited medical knowledge at the time, people were actually being buried alive. This would explain the accounts of noises being heard from graves, and the scratches found on the lids of coffins, which people put down to vampires trying to escape their tombs. It is possible that during their attempted escape, people would bash their noses or heads and cause bleeding, leading to the belief that the inhabitant had been 'feeding'. Another very straightforward and likely explanation to the recently disturbed and disordered burial sites is grave robbing, which was a somewhat common practice for the era.

A standout common event in instances of mass vampire hysteria was clusters of unexplained, usually sudden and mysterious deaths. It is theorised that these deaths, which were attributed to vampires, were actually due to contagious diseases. Some of the most famous vampire cases, including Blagojevich, involved a community plagued by what seemed to be an unstoppable killing force that did not kill suddenly, but often slowly and painfully, draining the life out of the victims. This was most likely not a vampire attack, but the result of an outbreak of tuberculosis, a chronic infectious disease that causes the victim

Folklore vs Pop culture

Vampires as we know them today stand in stark contrast to the terrors that plagued real villages and people

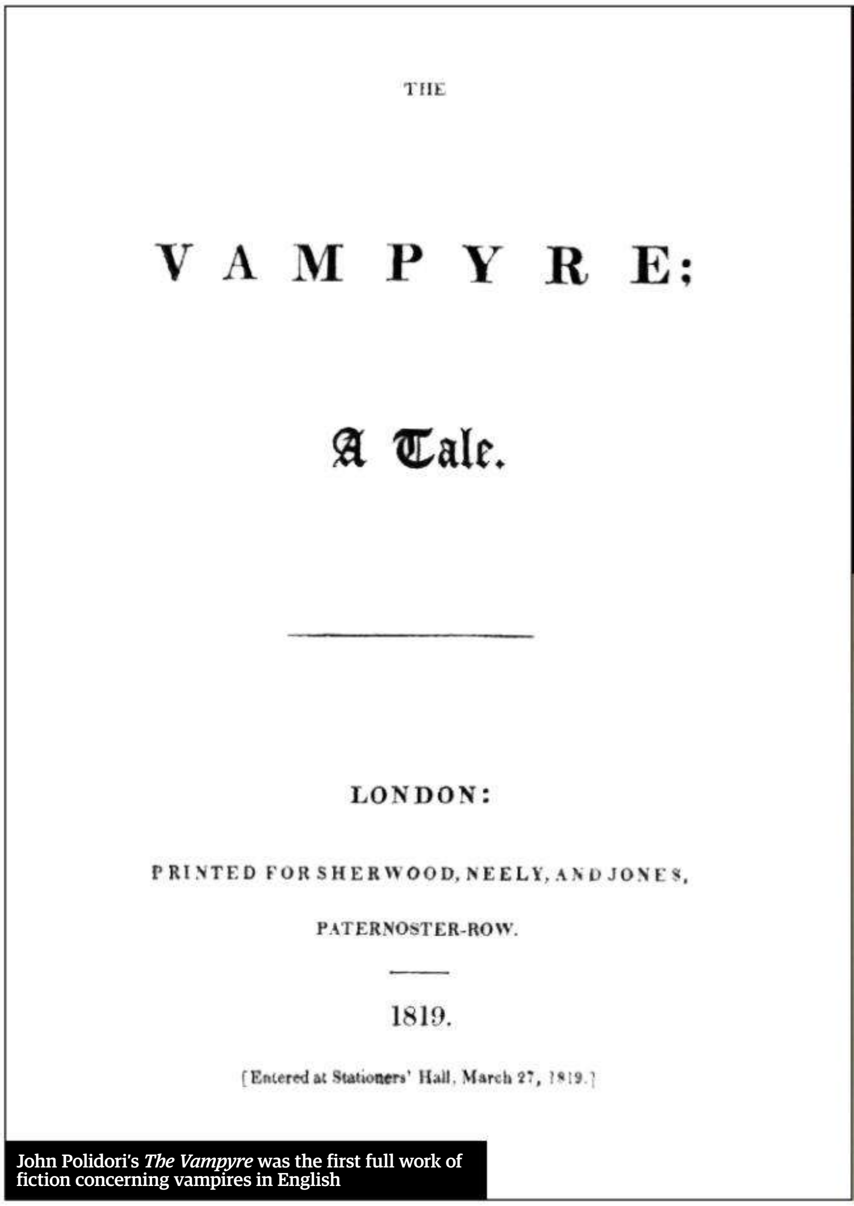
Ruddy complexion	Pale complexion
Clad in linen shroud	Clad in high-collar cloak
Bloated, terrifying corpses	Alluring, seductive, young appearance
Reflection can be seen	No reflection visible
Leaves behind a corpse when killed	Turns to dust when killed
Does not need human blood to survive	Survives on human blood
Victim must be bitten and die to become a vampire	Creates another vampire via bite
Can turn into wolves, dogs, cats but not usually bats	Strongly associated with turning into a bat
Casts shadows	Does not cast shadows
Powers weakened during the day, but not killed by sunlight	Sunlight is lethal



Rabies has been linked to vampire sightings. Often spread by bats and wolves, both these animals have strong associations to vampires

to cough up blood and undergo extreme weight loss, as if the person is being drained. With the disease easily spread through the air, and usually killing about 50 per cent of sufferers left untreated, it is easy to see why this ravaging disease could cause mass hysteria. As tuberculosis also has symptoms of fever and toxaemia (blood poisoning), it is entirely possible that tales of vampires would influence the victim's subconscious and produce terrifying visions of monsters in the night.

Another disease that has been linked to vampire sightings is rabies. This viral disease is often spread by wolves and bats, two animals with strong links to vampires. The aversion to garlic also associated with vampires can be linked to rabies, which causes hypersensitivity. The disease is known to directly affect portions of the brain, turning a rational person violent, excitable, even highly sexual. It can also affect normal sleeping patterns, leading to the nocturnal aspect associated with vampires. Rabies can compel people to bite others, and cause bloody frothing at the mouth. This disease is brutal - killing almost all who become infected with it. Interestingly enough, there is a historical legend that once infected with rabies, a person would be unable to look at their reflection - an obvious allusion to the similar vampire legend that the beings have no reflection. Whether rabies is the central cause for the vampire frenzy is up for debate, but it is easy to see how this horrible disease could add gravitas to the folklore tales of



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A Tale.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR SHERWOOD, NEELY, AND JONES,

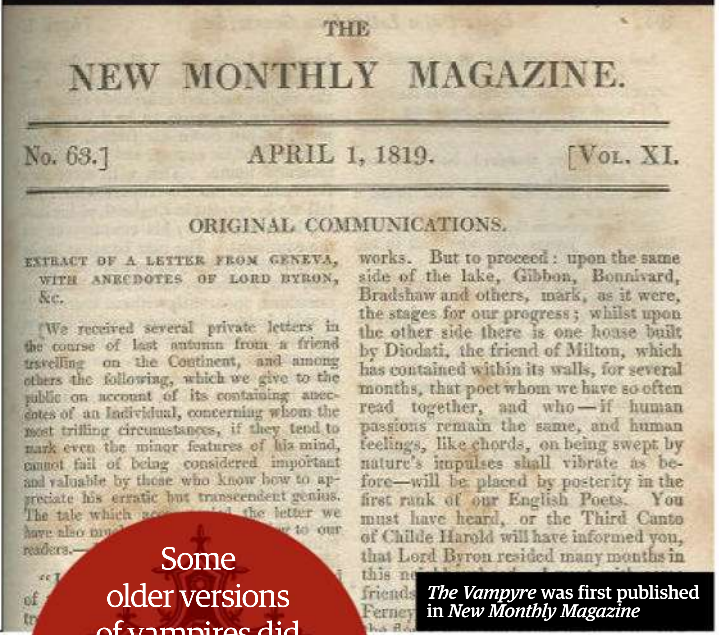
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1819.

[Entered at Stationers' Hall, March 27, 1819.]

John Polidori's *The Vampyre* was the first full work of fiction concerning vampires in English

Polidori (pictured here) was Lord Byron's doctor



THE

NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

No. 63.] APRIL 1, 1819. [VOL. XI.

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM GENEVA, WITH ANECDOTES OF LORD BYRON, &c.

[We received several private letters in the course of last autumn from a friend travelling on the Continent, and among others the following, which we give to the public on account of its containing anecdotes of an Individual, concerning whom the most trifling circumstances, if they tend to mark even the minor features of his mind, cannot fail of being considered important and valuable by those who know how to appreciate his erratic but transcendent genius. The tale which

works. But to proceed: upon the same side of the lake, Gibbon, Bonnivard, Bradshaw and others, mark, as it were, the stages for our progress; whilst upon the other side there is one house built by Diodati, the friend of Milton, which has contained within its walls, for several months, that poet whom we have so often read together, and who—if human passions remain the same, and human feelings, like chords, on being swept by nature's impulses shall vibrate as before—will be placed by posterity in the first rank of our English Poets. You must have heard, or the Third Canto of Childe Harold will have informed you, that Lord Byron resided many months in

The Vampyre* was first published in *New Monthly Magazine

Some older versions of vampires did not take human form at all, and were instead supernatural, demonic entities

vampires, which were gaining speed and popularity at the time.

As often happens in folklore, tales of vampires began to permeate into fiction. John Polidori's *The Vampyre* was the first full work of fiction concerning vampires in English. Interestingly enough, Polidori was Lord Byron's doctor, and based his vampire on the stylish British nobleman. This may have been the catalyst for turning these grim monsters of folklore into a more romantic, seductive being.

The differences between the 'real' vampires from folklore, and the depictions of vampires that emerged in literature and, later, Hollywood, were significant. Whereas folklore vampires were usually simple peasants who had recently passed away, the popular image of a vampire that began to develop was an aristocratic man of great age and intelligence, who was irresistibly attractive. The vampires of fiction were given powers never attributed to the vampires who stalked the 18th-century villages, such as telepathy and mind control. The idea of a vampire being harmed by sunlight was also an entirely new concept that seemed to develop with vampire fiction, being absent in earlier vampire novels.

The most influential vampire novel of all time, *Dracula* by Bram Stoker, worked much in the way the tales of folklore vampires did, by striking a chord with people of the era. People in the Victorian era were being ravaged by contagious diseases like tuberculosis and syphilis, and the concept that Stoker developed, that vampirism was a contagious disease of demonic possession with its undertones of sex, blood and death, was one that much of the population could empathise with. Vampires were still subjects of fear, monsters that had to be defeated, but there was a fascination with the beings and the unfortunate burdens they found themselves saddled with due to little fault of their own. The vampire of folklore, who returned to kill, rape and terrorise, had been replaced by an articulate, intelligent and almost tragic figure. It was this terrifying but intriguing character that was picked up on and developed across other works of fiction, movies and television, transforming the vampire of myth and legend in new and unexpected ways.

"Interestingly enough, Polidori was Lord Byron's doctor, and based his vampire on the stylish British nobleman"

Debunking the vampire myth

How science can explain the phenomena that made people believe in the undead

Words by **Jackie Snowden**

Legends of beings that defied death and preyed on the living date back to ancient times. Many early civilisations featured vampiric creatures in their lore, such as the child-eating demon Lamia of ancient Greek mythology and the life-sucking edimmu ghosts of Mesopotamian legend. The belief in vampires became particularly common in the folklore of medieval Europe and persisted for hundreds of years, the superstitions often resurfacing during outbreaks of plague and other illnesses.

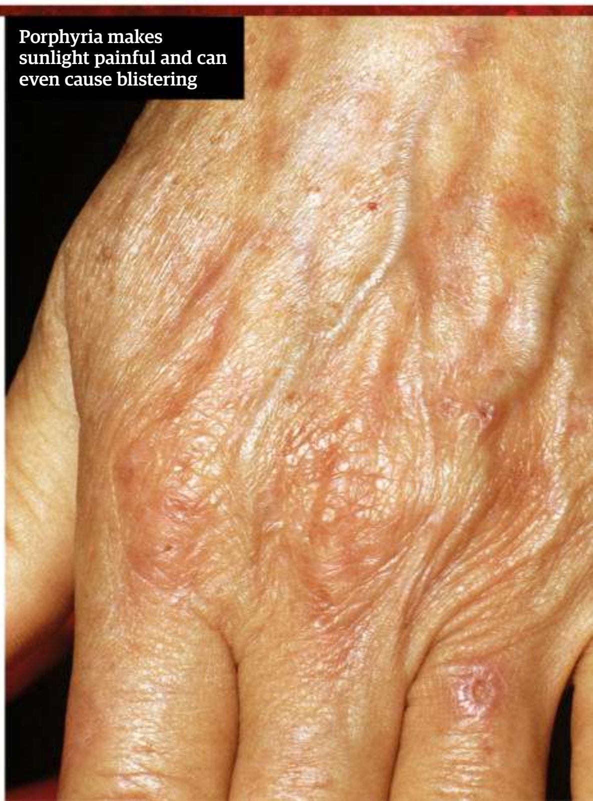
But as our scientific understanding improved, the mysteries at the root of these beliefs were gradually unravelled.

Large fangs, hypersensitivity to sunlight and blood around the mouth could all be explained by then-unknown diseases and the natural process of decay after death.

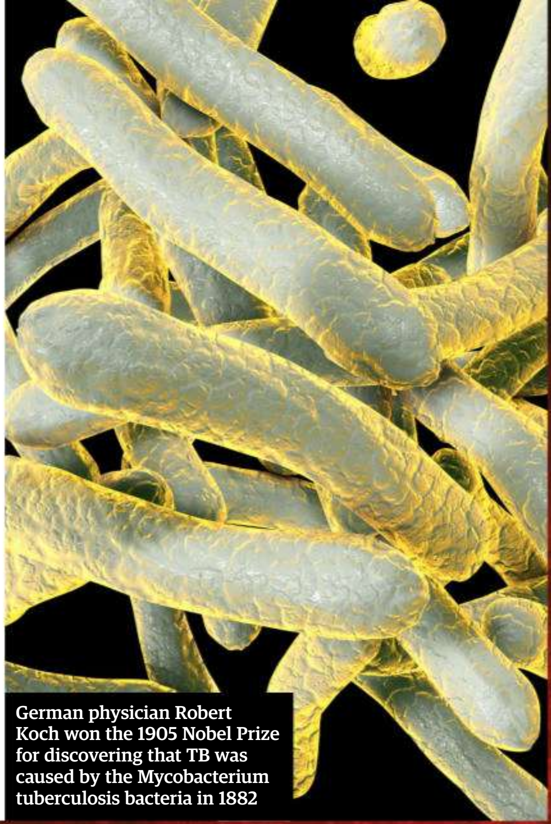
> "The belief became common in the folklore of medieval Europe, the superstitions often resurfacing during outbreaks of plague and other illnesses"

Fangs, sunlight and garlic

The classic vampires of legend have prominent fangs to pierce their victims' necks, are nocturnal and have pale skin due to their aversion to sunlight. They can also be warded off with garlic. Thanks to medical advances, these days we know of several conditions that could actually explain some of these features. Porphyrias are a group of conditions that may have contributed to the vampire myth. One type, called congenital erythropoietic porphyria (CEP), causes a toxic buildup of light-activated molecules in the skin. When sufferers are exposed to sunlight, these toxins can eat away at the skin, damaging the gum tissue to make teeth look longer and fang-like. As well as Sun sensitivity, porphyria can also make people hypersensitive to food high in sulphur, like garlic. Similar symptoms can be experienced by those suffering from rabies, a deadly virus that can be transmitted to humans if bitten by an infected animal. Rabid people can develop insomnia, become increasingly aggressive - even trying to bite other people - and demonstrate an aversion to strong stimuli, including bright light and strong smells such as garlic. The diagnosis of rabies also fits the familiar depiction of male vampires pursuing female victims. The condition is seven times more common in men than in women and can cause an increased libido by affecting the body's limbic system.

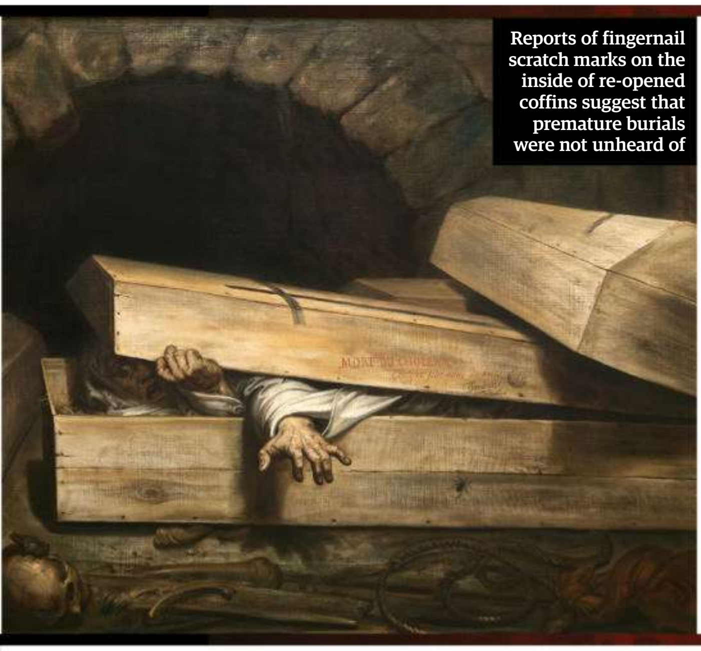


Porphyria makes sunlight painful and can even cause blistering


German physician Robert Koch won the 1905 Nobel Prize for discovering that TB was caused by the Mycobacterium tuberculosis bacteria in 1882

Dripping blood

In times when people were wary of vampires, occasionally corpses were dug up to check they were still dead. Their fears were exacerbated when bodies were found to have blood oozing from the nose and mouth, giving the impression they'd been feasting off the living. In reality, what looked like blood was actually 'purge fluid', the result of the natural decay process as the internal organs start to break down. Symptoms of disease also contributed to the blood-sucking myth. Tuberculosis (TB) is a bacterial infection that primarily affects the lungs and causes sufferers to cough up blood. Before the illness was understood, people blamed these mysterious deaths on supernatural forces. The New England 'Vampire Panic' in the early 1800s, for example, was a TB outbreak that affected entire families. The deaths were blamed on the first victim of the family somehow feeding off their surviving relatives from beyond the grave. When they exhumed bodies to try and prevent what they assumed was vampiric activity, their worries were (mistakenly) 'confirmed' by the fact that tuberculosis victims would often be found with their mouths full of blood.


Reports of fingernail scratch marks on the inside of re-opened coffins suggest that premature burials were not unheard of

Buried alive

Fear of the dead rising again meant that the living would sometimes take some rather macabre precautions to ensure this didn't happen. Positioning a sickle around the body's neck in the coffin, stabbing the corpse through the chest, or slicing its knee tendons were just some of the methods used during burials to make sure the dead couldn't escape.

This belief that the dead might not stay that way was likely influenced by horrifying cases of people being buried alive. Poor medical knowledge meant that victims could be mistakenly declared dead and buried prematurely, only to regain consciousness when it was too late.

For example, people with catalepsy can have seizures in which the body goes stiff and the breathing and heart rate slows dramatically, which could easily lead to a false diagnosis of death.

Mange and movie mania

In the 1990s, stories of a mysterious creature feeding on the blood of livestock started to emerge in Puerto Rico, US. Locals called the culprit the chupacabra ('goat eater'), describing it as a beast with long claws and spikes along its spine. Its victims would be found with vampire-like puncture marks on their necks and no sign of other injuries. The tale of the chupacabra soon spread across Latin America and the southern US, but by the 2000s witnesses' descriptions became far less alien. The creature was said to be hairless and canine. Investigator Benjamin Radford, a research fellow for the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry, set out to find the truth. Over five years, he interviewed witnesses and collected evidence, including specimens of livestock victims and alleged chupacabra bodies. DNA analysis of the 'chupacabras' revealed they were coyotes, dogs or even raccoons that suffered from mange, which causes itching, hair loss, inflammation and gauntness, all of which add up to a monster-like appearance. It's also not unusual for dogs and other canines to kill prey with a bite to the neck and not eat them. Interestingly, the first sighting of a chupacabra came not long after the alien horror film *Species* was released in Puerto Rico.

In Radford's interviews, he discovered that the first witness had watched the film sometime before her sighting, making it likely that the initial reports were the product of an overactive imagination.

A fox cub with sarcoptic mange, which is caused by mites that infest the skin

The vampire hunter's handbook

Identifying a vampire was half the battle, but how would you protect yourself from and even kill these elusive creatures?

Words by **Edoardo Albert**

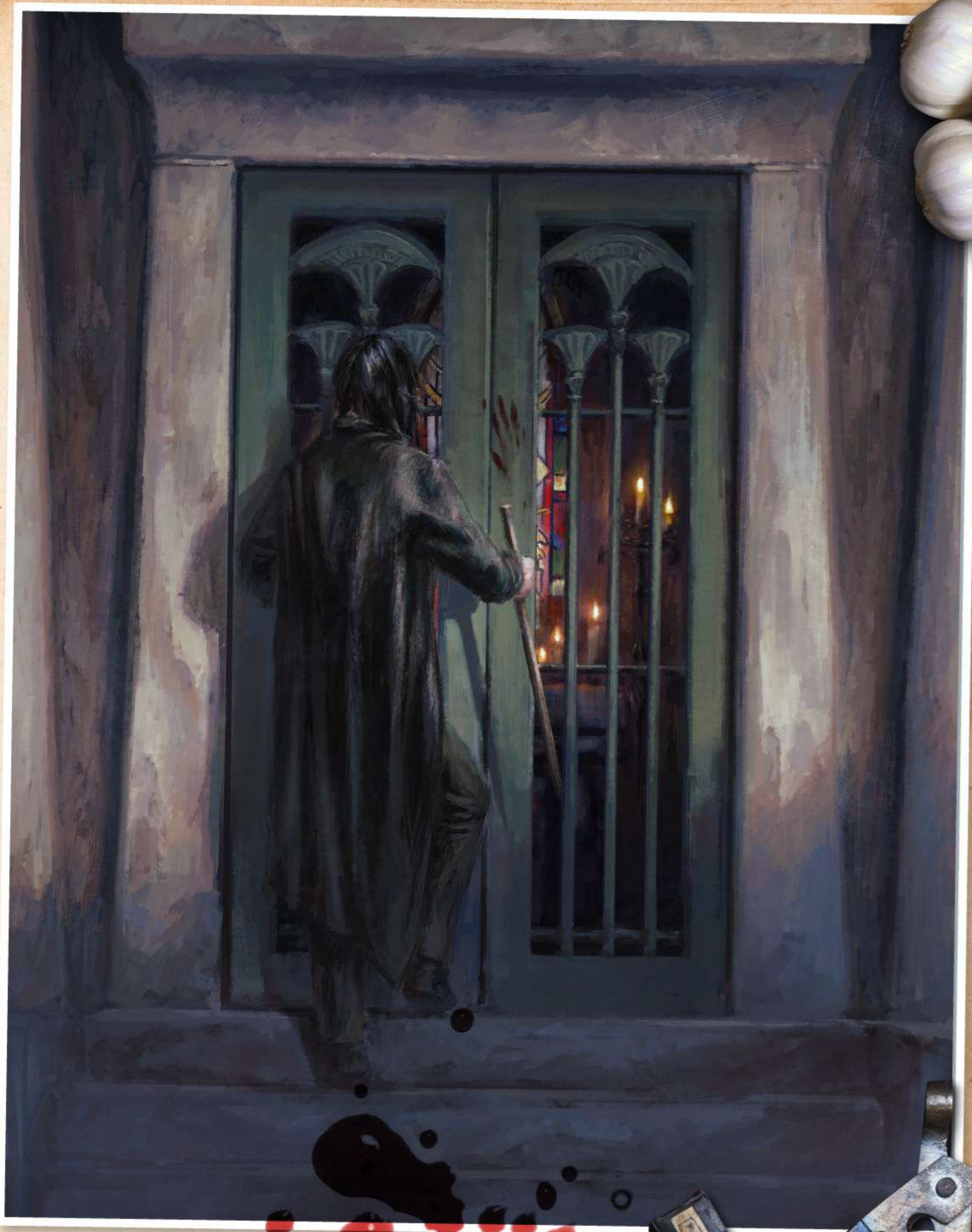
The roots of the modern vampire, and indeed its very name, come from Southeastern Europe. It was here that the fear of the vampire was strongest and lingered longest. It was from here that the word itself derives, via the German Vampir, from the Serbian word 'vampir'.

So it is among the peoples of Southeastern Europe that the greatest experience of hunting vampires is to be found. In the Balkans, the surest vampire hunters were the dhampir, the progeny of a union between a vampire and a human being. Usually, the father of a dhampir was a male vampire, his mother a human female whom the vampire desired but did not wish to turn. The product of such an unnatural union was blessed, or cursed, with a number of abilities that made him (dhampirs were traditionally regarded as male) particularly suited to hunting down and killing vampires. In particular, a dhampir had most of the strengths of a vampire without its weaknesses. Being a champion of the light, a dhampir was not afflicted by religious objects, nor was he affected by sunlight, giving rise to the other name for a dhampir: daywalker. Traditionally, dhampirs were said to be of pale complexion with dark hair, usually worn long, and they had superhuman strength and flexibility. Given the ability that some of the more powerful vampires had to transform themselves into other creatures, or even to pass unseen, one of the most useful abilities of a dhampir was to be able to see a vampire even when it tried to conceal itself under the cloaks of invisibility or another form. So the first thing someone would do if they suspected vampires had taken up residence in the local area would be to contact a dhampir. They were, after all, born for the job. However, vampire hunting was difficult, dangerous work. If you wanted it done, and done well, you would need to be prepared to pay the dhampir his price. There are records of dhampirs into the second half of the 20th century. After that, they enter silence.

Identifying a vampire in Southeastern Europe was no mean feat. If someone appeared to be wasting away, particularly if there was evidence of bite marks on the throat or breast, and you saw disturbed earth or mysterious mists at a cemetery or surrounding a lonely and deserted house, then you may have had a vampire visitation. This would require further investigation. If the suspect had taken to hosting late-night soirées to which all the most beautiful women of the area were invited, then suspicions were aroused – particularly if you had not received an invitation yourself. He probably suspected you were a vampire hunter and did not want to invite you into his house. Vampires harboured a secret belief that the same laws of hospitality that precluded them entering a house to which they had not been invited

> Saturday is an auspicious day for the birth of a vampire hunter

> "Vampire hunting was difficult, dangerous work. If you wanted it done, and done well, you would need to be prepared to pay the dhampir his price"



© Ian Hinley

would stop you entering their lair uninvited. The best way to disabuse them of this notion was by driving a stake through their undead hearts. This was the classic vampire of developed Balkan folklore, the Dracula iteration that has fascinated the world since Bram Stoker wrote up as fiction his account of an encounter with vampire nobility. But many vampires were not nearly so glamorous, and definitely would not have offered you a selection of canapés before biting. In older folklore, vampires were hideous, bloated creatures, often a livid purple in colour. As such, they closely resembled reanimated corpses.

Since these vampires were usually found wearing their grave shroud, with long fingernails ingrained with earth as a result of scrabbling their way up out of the ground, identification as one of the undead was rarely ever an issue.

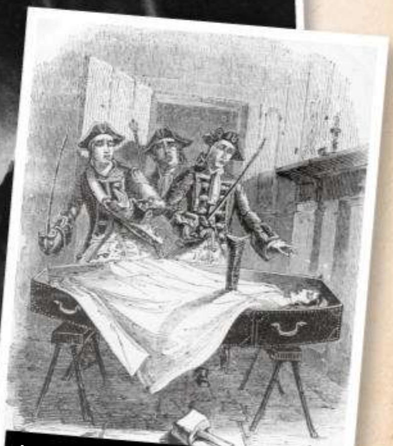
Most authorities agree that a vampire had to return to its coffin during the day. Older vampires, who were interred before the use of coffins became widespread, had greater latitude with regard to their daytime sleeping arrangements, needing only to have with them

> "In older folklore, vampires were hideous, bloated creatures, often a livid purple in colour. As such, they closely resembled reanimated corpses"

The vampire spotter's guide

Key clues that would indicate whether the person next to you was really a vampire

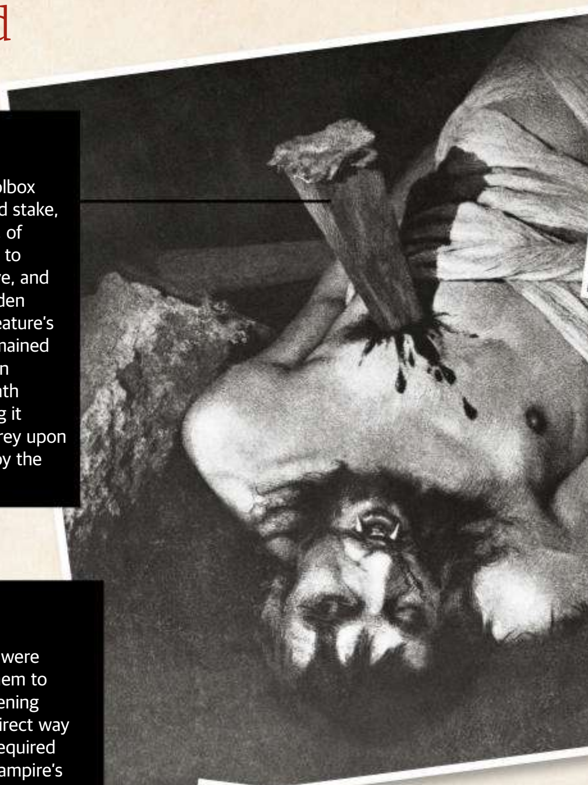
1. Only comes out at night
2. Pale skin
3. Dark hair
4. Abnormally long canines/fangs
5. Red or black eyes
6. Long, sharp fingernails (with dirt underneath if they dig out of their lair)
7. Bad breath (a diet of blood plays havoc with gastrointestinal flora, as does being dead)
8. Superhuman strength
9. Unusual stealth and agility
10. Poor appetite (apart from very rare meat)
11. Hates the smell of garlic
12. Avoids mirrors
13. A fondness for dark clothes and crushed velvet
14. Either intensely sexually attractive or completely repulsive



An illustration from the early vampire story *Varney the Vampire or the Feast of Blood*

How to kill a vampire

The undead might not be alive, but they can still be killed

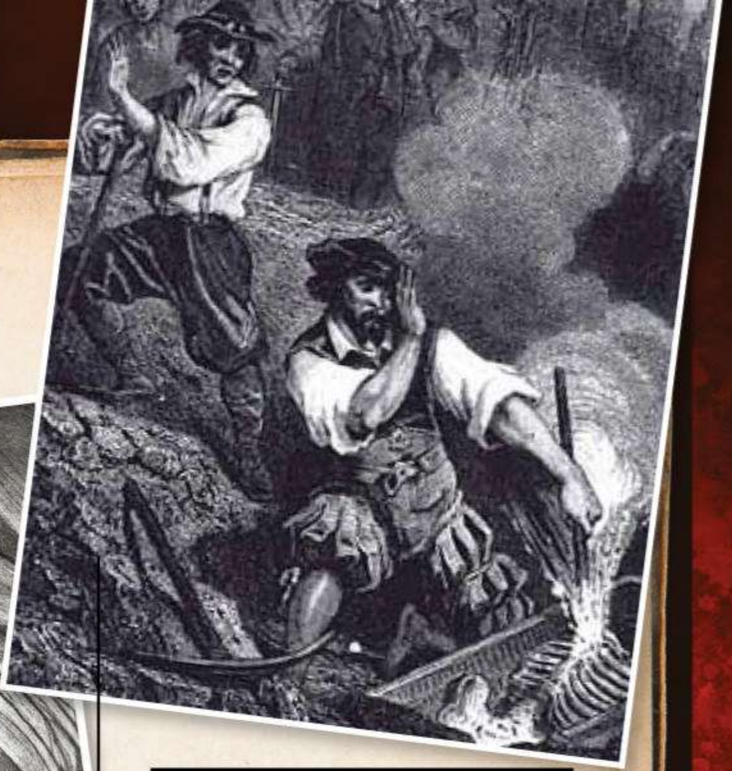


Stake

The key item in the vampire hunter's toolbox was a simple piece of wood. A sharpened stake, preferably carved from ash or hawthorn, of about three feet in length. The best way to destroy a vampire was to fix it in its grave, and the way to do this was by driving a wooden stake through its heart. Although the creature's heart did not beat – it is not alive – it remained the centre of its being, and a stake driven through the heart into the ground beneath would fix it permanently in place, making it impossible for the creature to rise and prey upon the living. In some cases, it would destroy the vampire completely.

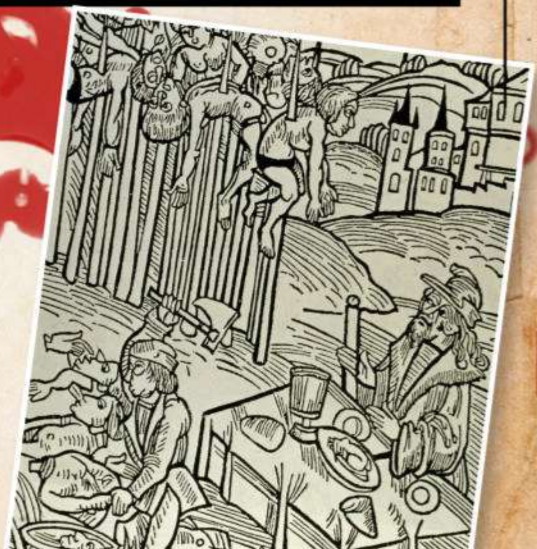
Sunlight

According to most authorities, vampires were vulnerable to sunlight. Thus, exposing them to direct sunlight by breaking windows, opening doors or removing roofs was the most direct way of destroying them, although it usually required a few minutes' exposure to ensure the vampire's destruction. It was best to ensure that any escape route was cut off to them by mining it with an item that repelled vampires, such as holy water or garlic. Before using this method, the experienced vampire hunter always checked the weather: many vampire hunters were lost as a result of unexpectedly overcast conditions. Some authorities aver that natural light generators produced the same effect, but this remains contentious.



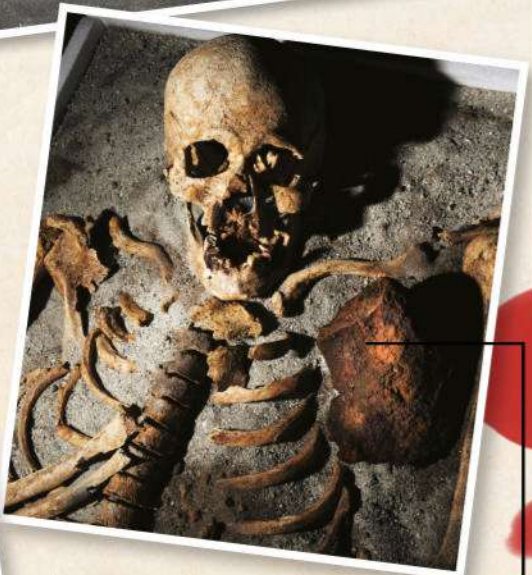
Fire

Burn a vampire for long enough and it would die. The problem was keeping the creature in the flames long enough to kill it, since fire was not as destructive to vampires as sunlight. However, fire was often used to ensure the final destruction of a vampire: the severed head of a vampire was sometimes burned rather than being buried separately. The body of a vampire could be burned and the ashes scattered to ensure that the creature did not rise again.



Decapitation

Cutting the vampire's head off and burying it away from the body, or between its legs, was another effective method of ensuring the undead stayed properly dead. The best time to do this was when the vampire was taking its rest during daylight hours, although some authorities believe that not all vampires were nightwalkers, so care needed to be exercised when approaching a vampire's lair, even in daytime. For removing the head, an axe or sharp sword were the preferred implements: a saw would allow the vampire to wake, with dire consequences for the vampire hunter.



Steel and iron

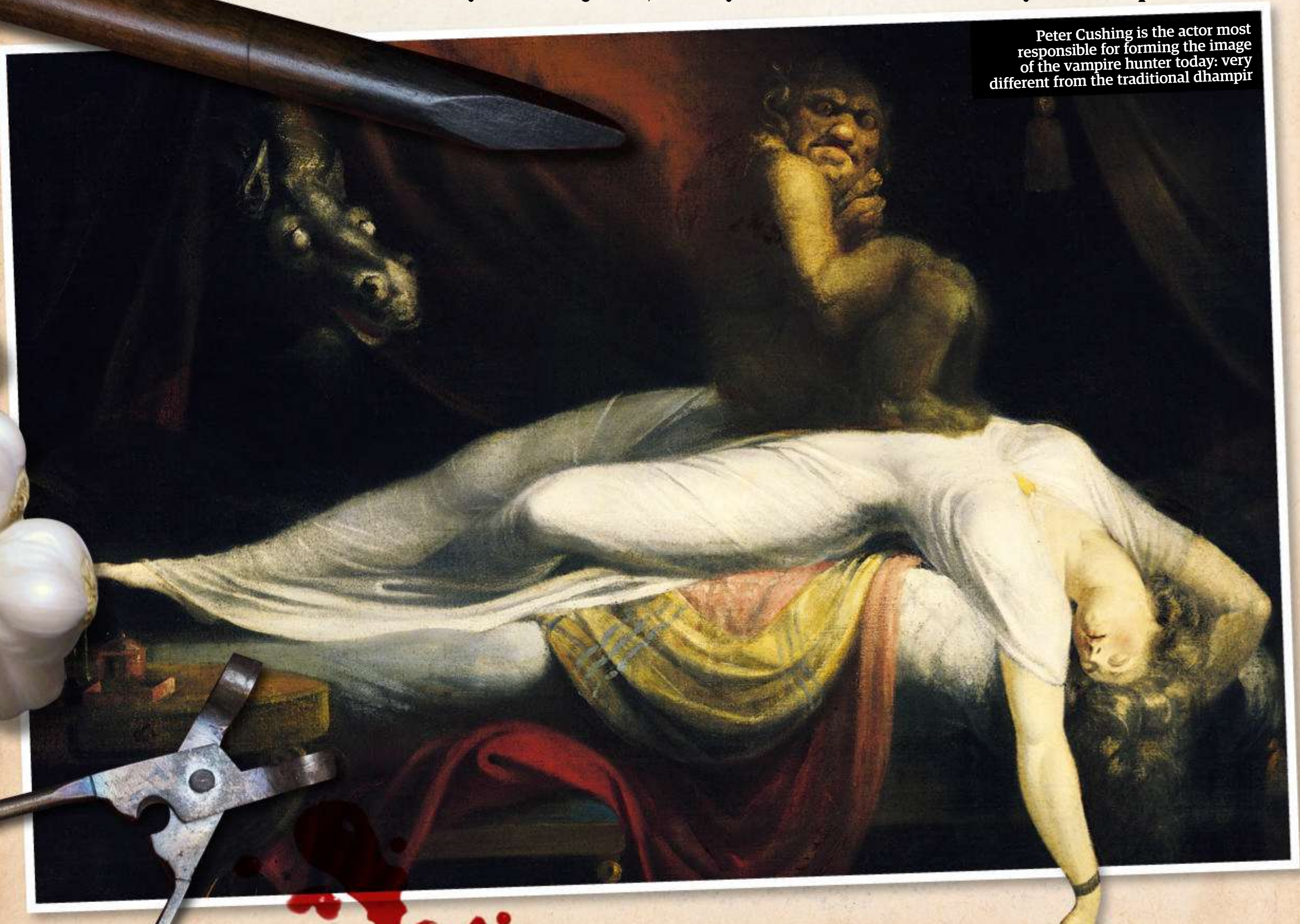
To ensure a potential vampire did not rise to join the ranks of the undead, the body was buried with steel or iron needles transfixing its heart, and with other pieces of metal in its mouth and ears, and covering its eyes and between its fingers. Further pieces of scrap metal embedded in the body would help ensure it did not rise. Hawthorn stakes were also useful, since hawthorn has apotropaic (protection against evil) properties. If you did not have enough metal to hand, a brick could be placed in the prospective vampire's mouth, as was done in the case of a 16th-century Venetian burial recently excavated by archaeologists.

a small amount of their native soil. In certain cases, this could have enabled a vampire to lead a nomadic existence, as he had only to spread his soil to make his bed, but it did provide another avenue for vampire identification: did the suspected vampire carry bags of soil in his pockets? If so, he or she could be disposed of by engaging a skilled pickpocket. Without its native soil to rest upon, this variety of vampire would expire. It was also worth watching to see if the suspected vampire answered the door in the evening while brushing over its clothes. Native soil tended to stick to the rich fabrics that the more aristocratic vampires favoured (velvet was a firm favourite, despite being prone to picking up soil).

On many occasions, however, it was apparent that a vampire had taken up residence in an area – cattle and sheep were wasting away, relatives or friends were shutting themselves away – but it was not clear who that vampire was. Then, more traditional methods of identifying a vampire might have been necessary. If there was evidence that the vampire was resting during the day in a grave, then the boy and horse test may have been employed to ascertain which grave. For this, a boy under ten was required, who should have been both a virgin and able to ride, for he should be mounted upon a similarly virginal stallion, preferably black in colour. The horse and his boy would have been directed to wander around the graveyard aimlessly. When you saw the horse shy away from a grave, then you would have located your vampire. To make sure, you would have looked for disturbances in the earth, holes or footsteps leading away from the grave.

The safest and surest way to kill a vampire was to identify its lair, wait there until it returned, sated, from its night's feasting, and then kill it while it slept. While this may not appear particularly honourable, all the authorities affirm that honour was satisfied by killing a vampire; there was no requirement to give it a fighting chance. Indeed, since many vampires were significantly faster, stronger and more agile than a non-vampire, with psychic powers that may have included mind control and physical transformation, it was generally agreed that the more you could stack the cards in your favour, the better your chances. In this, you would be aided by the remarkable soundness of vampiric sleep: they slept the sleep of

> "The horse and his boy would have been directed to wander around the graveyard aimlessly. When you saw the horse shy away from a grave, then you would have located your vampire"



Peter Cushing is the actor most responsible for forming the image of the vampire hunter today: very different from the traditional dhampir

Warding off vampires

Hunting vampires was difficult, lonely work. Here are some things that would protect a vampire hunter when they needed to unwind, eat or sleep

Eucharist

Catholic and Orthodox Christians believe the bread consecrated during Mass becomes the body of Christ. Vampires agreed. A consecrated host would burn a vampire, or hold it confined in its coffin. Trick a vampire into consuming the Eucharistic bread and it would most likely be destroyed, so not only did it provide warding but it could be used as a weapon.

Crucifix

Although we live in more secular times, vampires did not. A crucifix has a representation of Christ's crucified body on it and was more effective than a simple, plain cross, although an improvised cross could sometimes prove effective in extremis. It was better to carry a crucifix and to wear a rosary, which had a crucifix at the end, as a necklace. Best of all was to have both crucifix and rosary blessed by a priest before going out vampire hunting.

Garlic

It makes dinner taste better and warded off vampires: garlic was the ultimate super food. Belief in the apotropaic powers of garlic is very ancient, having its foundation in the use of garlic in traditional medicine. As a ward, garlic was effective against vampires, demons and werewolves. If people feared an attack, they would hang garlic in windows and over doors, rub garlic oil in fireplaces and keyholes, and wear a string of garlic as a necklace.

Holy water

Holy water is what Catholic and Orthodox Christians call a sacramental: a material substance – in this case water – that has been blessed. Holy water was used during baptism, and vampires could not abide it. In some cases, holy water sprayed onto a vampire burnt its skin. Clothing soaked in holy water also repelled vampires, but it needed to be soaked anew once the water had evaporated or its effective warding power would fade.

Mirrors

Vampires were creatures without a soul. As such, they left no image on film, nor were they reflected in mirrors. Thus a number of mirrors situated to reflect doors and windows provided warning that a vampire was attempting to enter the house. Some authorities believe vampires might have been repelled from entering a house by the sight of mirrors, so a protective cordon of reflective surfaces may have served as a further line of defence against the undead.

Invitations

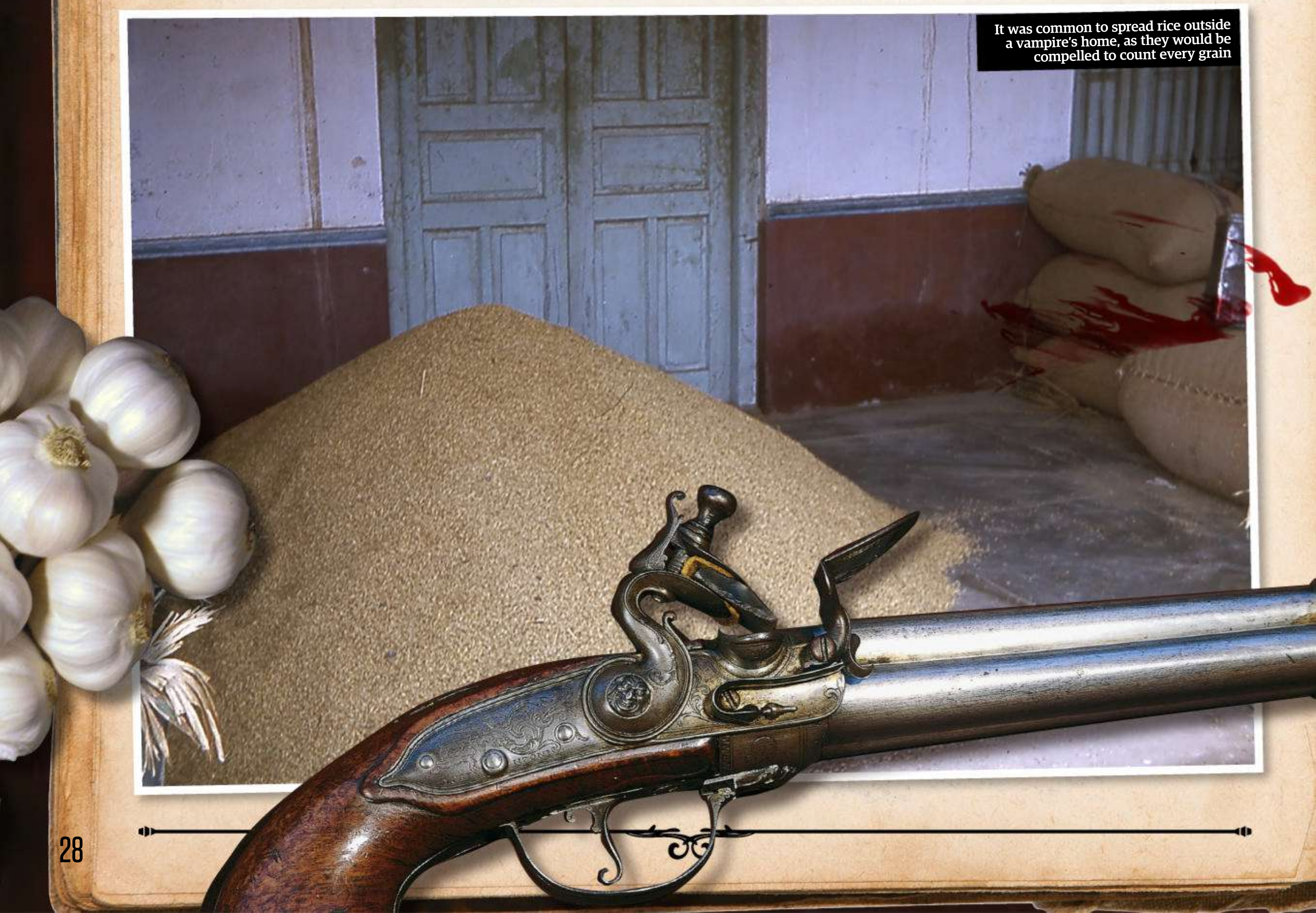
Vampires should never have been invited into the home. This was crucial. Most authorities agree that a vampire could not enter a private house or dwelling unless it was invited in by the inhabitants. While this would not protect people in public places or dwellings – a room at an inn, which was a public house, would probably not provide any defence against vampires – a careful examination of the bona fides of any visitor to your own home would have helped to ensure it remained a sanctuary against the hunger of the undead.

death, so would not be woken by the sound of men shovelling the earth off their grave or crowbars prising the lid from their sarcophagus. When you uncovered a vampire in its resting place, then you had to dispatch it immediately.

There may have been times when a vampire hunter encountered a vampire when it was awake. If it was aware of the hunter's identity, then the most prudent course of action would be to retreat, lest the hunter become the hunted. To gain sufficient time to effect a retreat, the hunter would try scattering a handful of salt or seeds in front of the pursuing vampire. Some vampires had OCD tendencies and, seeing objects spread out before them, felt compelled to count every grain before continuing their pursuit. However, vampires had extraordinarily sharp vision and were preternaturally quick - such a diversion would likely have only gained you a minute or two. This time could have been used to cross running water. Many vampires shied away from flowing water and found it difficult to cross. If it could, a vampire hunter would take refuge on consecrated ground - very few vampires could enter a church. Having made their retreat, the hunter would observe the vampire as it left, to see whether it was going back to feed or returning to its lair, and waited for the sun to rise so that they could return to the hunt.

When hunting non-European vampires, African, American or Asian vampires were not all restricted to the night. For instance, the asanbosam was a West African vampire with iron teeth and iron hooks for hands and feet. It roosted in trees, dropping from the branches to feed on unwary travellers below. If you suspected you were facing an asanbosam, a metal detector would provide early warning of its presence, so long as the vampire hunter remembered to wave it above himself rather than sweeping it over the ground. The adze of Togo and Ghana was a vampire that could transform into a firefly. Care therefore needed to be exercised near sparks - one might have been a vampire firefly. Another vampire, from the Americas this time, also had a fiery manifestation. The soucouyant by day passed as a wrinkled old woman. But at night, it stripped off its old skin, stored it in a mortar, and took flight as a fireball, searching for the living to feed on. As fire, the soucouyant could enter easily into houses, where she fed from the arms or legs of her victim. However, a soucouyant was particularly prone to obsessive counting - spread rice at her house or at a crossroads and she would have to collect every grain. While the soucouyant was counting rice, the vampire hunter could find her discarded skin and fill it with salt so that she wouldn't be able to put it back on again when she was done counting the rice. Another vampire variant from the Americas was La Patasola. She appeared to males in a beautiful guise, luring them into the forest. But once she had the man alone, La Patasola shifted back to her true shape: one legged, with a single breast and curved fangs, and fed. Despite only

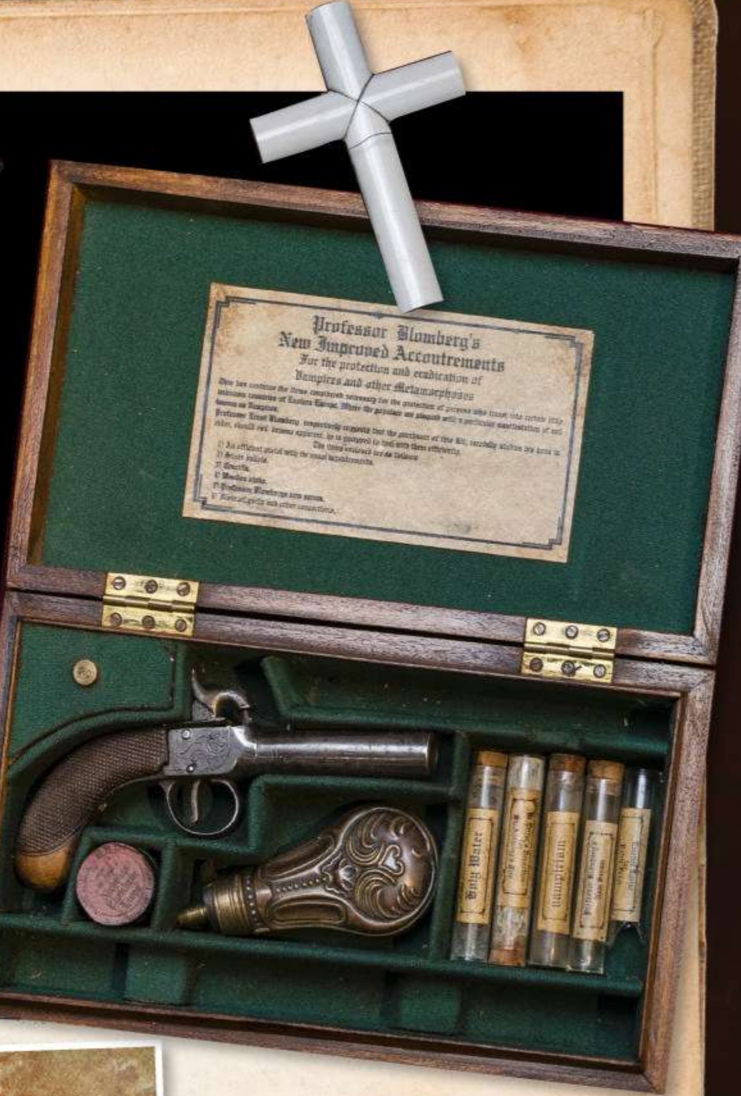
> "A soucouyant was prone to obsessive counting – spread rice at her house and she would have to collect every grain"



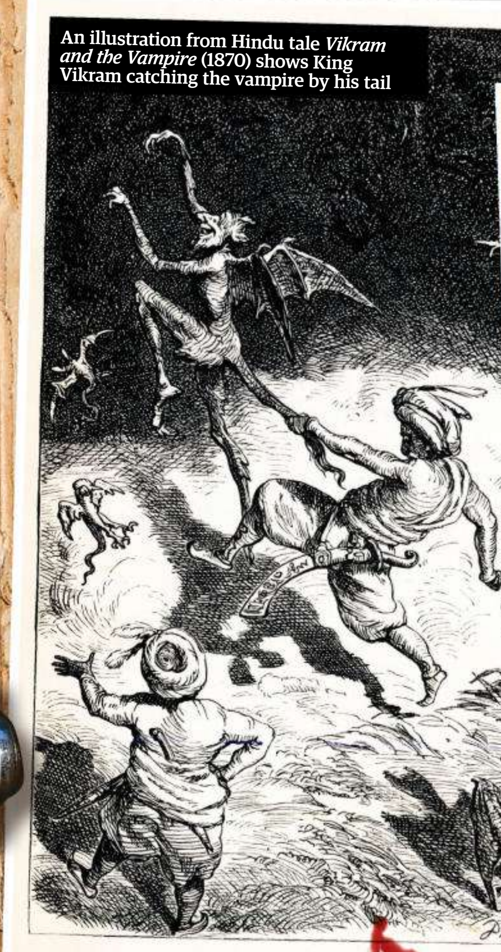
It was common to spread rice outside a vampire's home, as they would be compelled to count every grain

Vampire-hunting kits

Prior preparation was a necessity if you were serious about tracking down these creatures

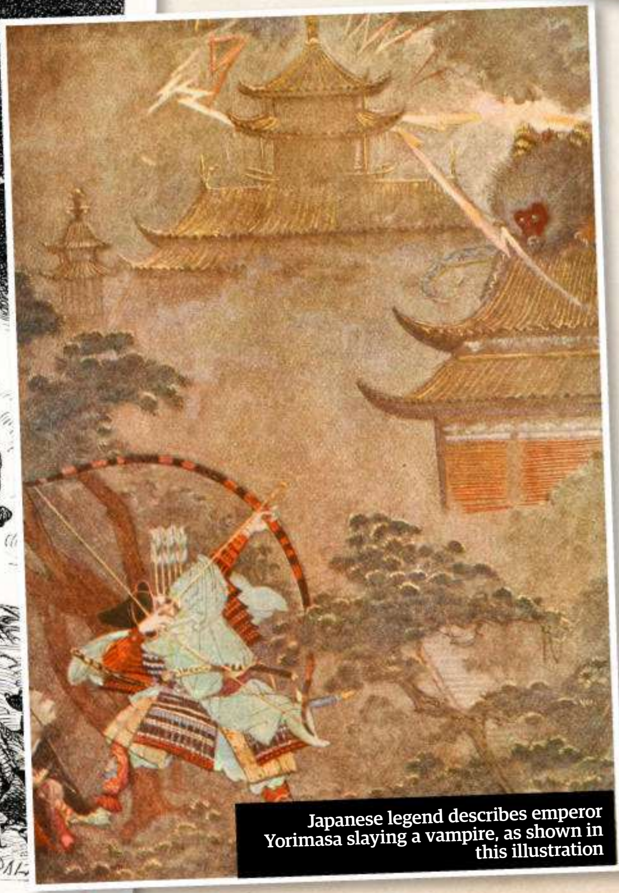

Professor Blomberg's
New Improved Accoutrements
For the protection and eradication of
Vampires and other Metamorphoses
Holy Water

Would-be vampire hunters searching online today will easily find vampire-hunting kits advertised, many claiming to be genuine Victorian antiques. They certainly look the part, being made from polished rosewood and normally containing a mallet, stakes, a percussion pistol, vials of holy water and a crucifix (although the supplied stakes are generally too short to be useful). So should the apprentice vampire hunter buy one of these kits, thinking he or she may be inheriting the equipment of one of the legendary vampire hunters of the past? Sadly, most advertised vampire-hunting kits post-date their supposed manufacture, being made in the 1930s to accompany the vampire craze that followed the 1931 film *Dracula*. However, one of these kits would provide many of the basic implements required by a vampire hunter, although we must advise you to prepare a number of longer stakes (and beware: the percussion pistols are not usually functional).



An illustration from Hindu tale *Vikram and the Vampire* (1870) shows King Vikram catching the vampire by his tail

The king, puffing with fury, followed him at the top of his speed, and caught him by his tail.

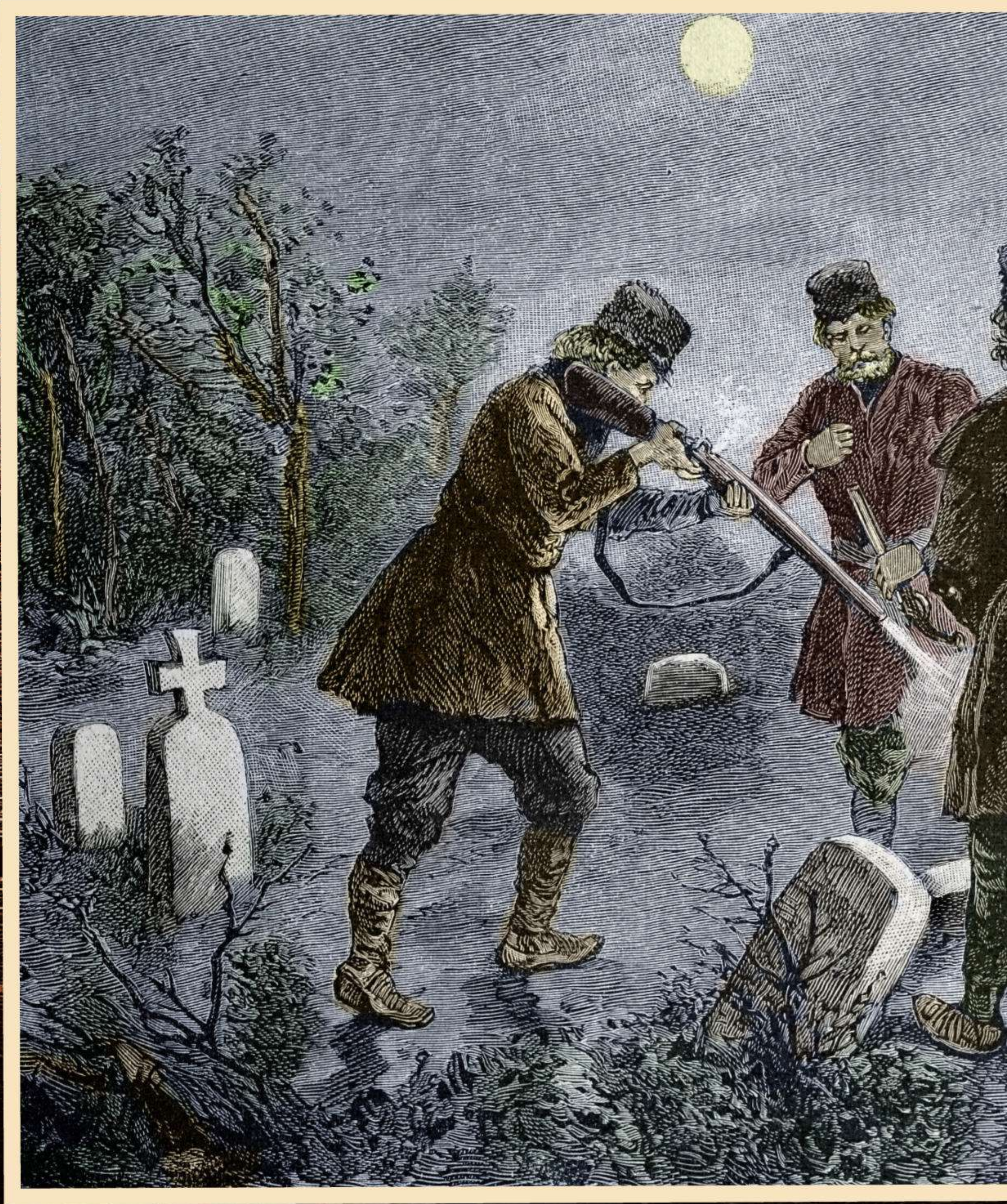


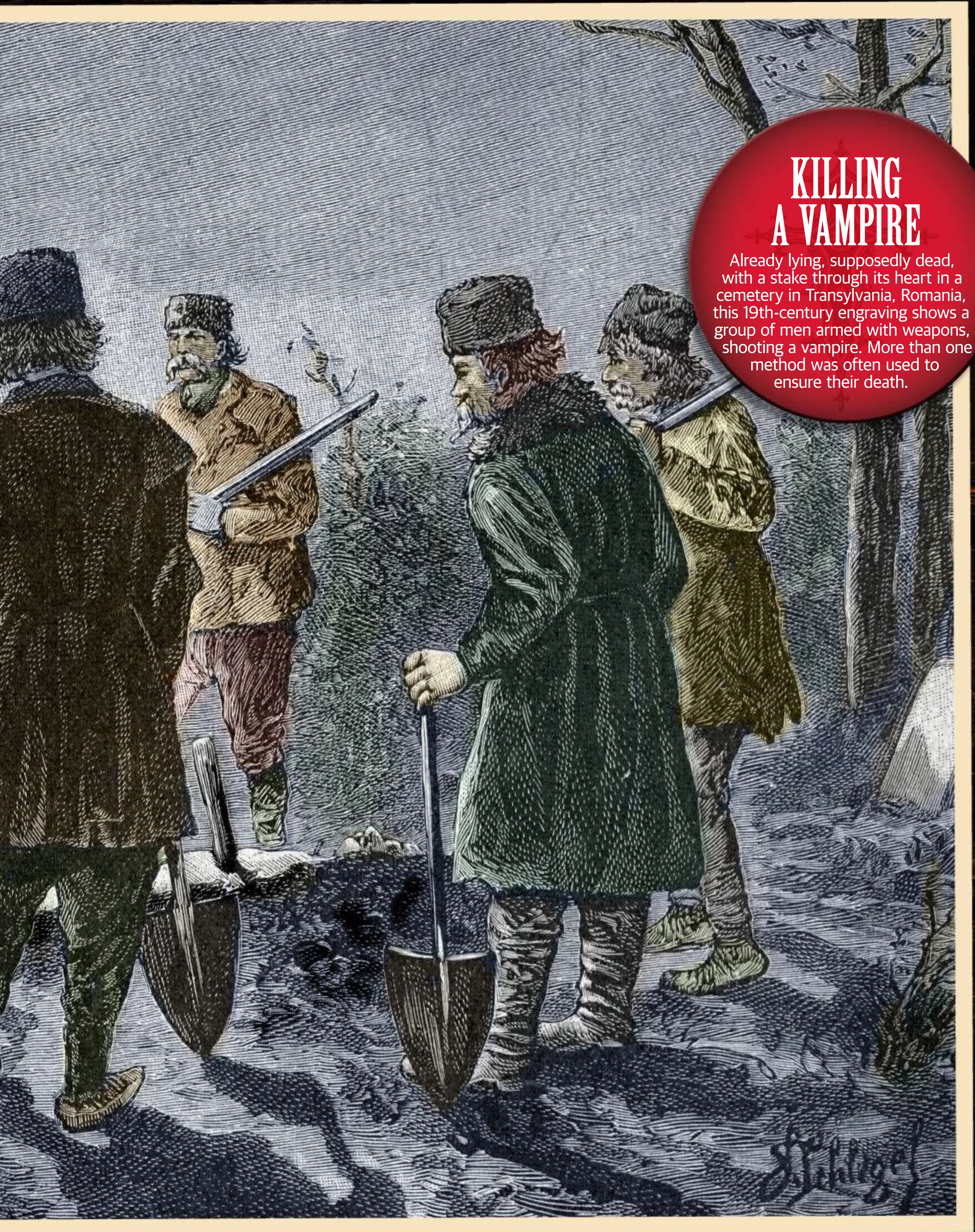
Japanese legend describes emperor Yorimasa slaying a vampire, as shown in this illustration

having one leg, La Patasola could move swiftly and silently through the forests that were her natural home and which she protected.

Coming from Southeast Asia, there were a class of vampires that could detach their heads from their bodes, sending these off in search of victims like blood-seeking missiles. In Malaysia, they were called Penanggalan and in the Philippines Manananggal. To protect yourself against flying heads seeking blood, people would tie thorny branches to windows and doors. These vampires, who passed the daylight hours as beautiful women, didn't like getting their hair tangled in the thorns, so they would pass on to less thorny pastures. As a vampire hunter, you could dispose of one of these vampires by finding its detached body and filling it with glass. A more witty and less lethal method of stopping these vampires was to turn the waiting body round. When the head returned, it would reattach itself without stopping to check if the body had been moved. Thus, the vampire would be revealed as the woman with her head on backwards.

As a vampire hunter, you would face all manner of such creatures. It was arduous, dangerous and demanding work.





KILLING A VAMPIRE

Already lying, supposedly dead, with a stake through its heart in a cemetery in Transylvania, Romania, this 19th-century engraving shows a group of men armed with weapons, shooting a vampire. More than one method was often used to ensure their death.

VAMPIRES AROUND THE WORLD

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Vampire spotting

Discover how vampire folklore differs in various parts of the world

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Arctic Bay
Barrow
Prudhoe Bay
Point Hope
Nome
Fort Good Hope
Fairbanks
Bethel
Anchorage
Whitehorse
Yellowknife
Kodiak
Churchill
Cold Bay
Fort Severn
Prince Rupert
Edmonton
Saskatoon
Calgary
Regina
Winnipeg
Vancouver
Victoria
Seattle
Helena
Thunder Bay
Portland
Bismarck
Pierre
Minneapolis
Ottawa
Quebec
Montreal
St. John's
Charlottetown
Halifax
Toronto
Buffalo
Boston
New York
Philadelphia
Washington D.C.
Milwaukee
Detroit
Cleveland
Pittsburgh
Des Moines
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Monterrey
Honolulu
Havana
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Merida
Veracruz
Puebla
Acapulco
Belmopan
Guatemala
Tegucigalpa
San Salvador
Managua
Kingston
Port-au-Prince
Santo Domingo
San Juan
Basseterre
Saint John's
Roseau
Castries
Bridgetown
Saint George's
Kingstown
Port-of-Spain
Caracas
Cartagena
Maracaibo
Valencia
San Cristobal
Ciudad Guayana
San José
Panama City
Medellin
Bogota
Cali
Quito
Guayaquil
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Boa Vista
Macapa
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Manaus
Santarem
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Leticia
Maraba
Caxias
Recife
Cruzeiro do Sul
Trujillo
Riberalta
Ji-Parana
Vilhena
Lima
Ica
Cusco
La Paz
Feira de Santana
Salvador
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Curitiba
Florianopolis
Posadas
Porto Alegre
Cordoba
Mendoza
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Santiago
Buenos Aires
Montevideo
Concepcion
Mar del Plata
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Bahia Blanca
Puerto Montt
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United Kingdom

While not rich in lore like other European countries, the UK has tales of vampire-like spectres haunting areas, spreading disease and drinking blood. Unlike other regions that have species of vampire, the UK has tales of individuals such as Hunderprest, who were cursed with features of what we now know as vampiric.

The Americas

In North America, vampires were commonly elegant creatures that would rise from the dead to suck blood from the living and spread disease. Nagual and other Mesoamerican creatures would shape-shift into a variety of animals, such as jaguars or birds, and these would also feast on blood or human hearts.

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Romania & Germany

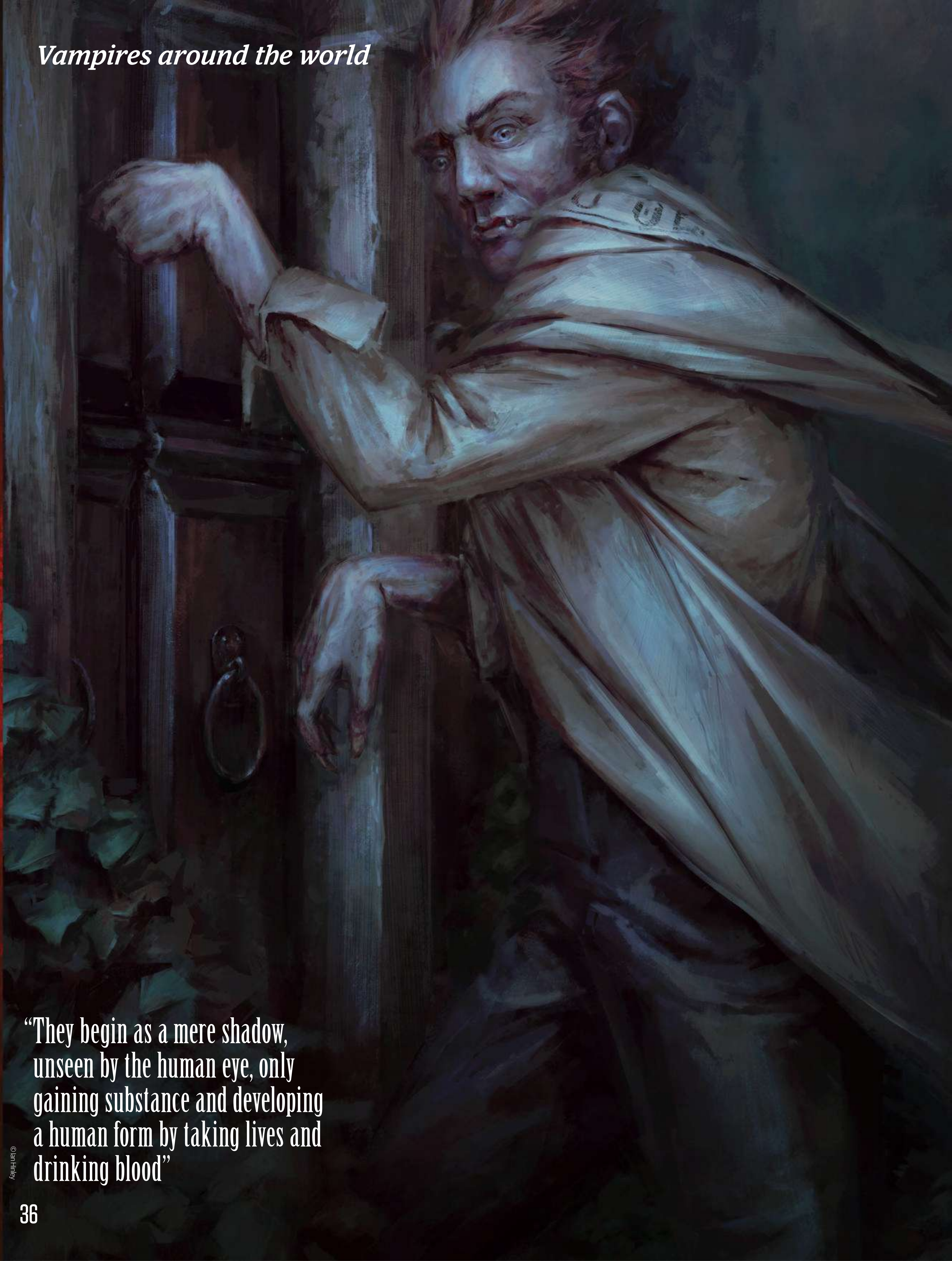
Home to the most famous vampire, Dracula, Romania has many types of vampires. Some, such as strigoi, are creatures with large wings that drink blood, while the moroaica drain people's life-force, and their victims then become strigoi. In Germany, nachzehrer would leech life from the living.

Asia

Vampires here tend to be victims of tragedy but have come back from the dead targeting married men, newborn children or the pregnant. Chedipe are similar to succubi, sneaking into houses and feeding on married men, while rakshasa are closer to European vampires, drinking blood from skulls.

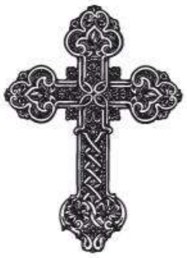
Slavic countries & Greece

Some vampires in these regions don't drink blood, whereas others do, but they share a lot of similarities. A vrykolakas, which is a ghostly creature that once lived a sinful life, takes on a more human form after drinking blood. They will also knock on doors and curse those who answer.



"They begin as a mere shadow, unseen by the human eye, only gaining substance and developing a human form by taking lives and drinking blood"

© Ian Hinley



Legendary bloodsuckers and walking corpses

From classical myth to horror-film fiend, how vampire-like creatures of legend became the ghoulish fiends we know today

Words by **Dee Dee Chainey**

SLAVIC COUNTRIES
GREECE

While vampire-like creatures have existed for thousands of years, the one we know and love today originated in Southeast Europe. Centuries later, vampire folk-tales-turned-legend have become a modern-day phenomena, with books, films and TV shows picking up tales to thrill and chill audiences across the globe.

A 17th-century tome, *The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola*, written by a Slovenian travel writer, is thought to be the first written document about vampires, and recounts the tale of the man who is possibly the first person to have been described as a vampire, or strigoi: Jure Grando. Jure lived in the small town of Kringa in modern-day Croatia. Dying of illness in 1656, he menaced the region for 16 years after his death, rising up each night to knock on doors; anyone who opened the door would die soon after. He terrorised his widow by regularly appearing at her window smiling, forcing her to perform her marital 'duties'.

Soon the townsfolk had had enough, and a group banded together with the local priest to exhume Jure's body, only to find him perfectly preserved and smiling. They repeatedly tried to stake him through the heart with a hawthorn branch, but each attempt failed. Finally, they realised decapitation was the answer. It's said that as the saw touched his throat, he gave a piercing scream, and blood gushed from his dead flesh. Finally, peace returned to Istria once more. Today, Kringa's inhabitants are making the most of the local legend, with a vampire-themed bar, souvenirs and apartments for tourists to stay in while they trace the history of the legend.

Vampire beliefs are similar throughout most of the Slavic regions, yet marked differences do occur. In eastern areas, particularly in the north, vampires do not drink blood, while Ukrainian vampires can still be alive, rather than the revenants we might expect. In the southern regions, becoming a vampire is a gradual process, akin to the development of Voldemort in *Harry Potter*. They begin as a mere shadow, unseen by the human eye, only gaining substance and developing a human form by taking lives and drinking blood. In Baltic regions, vampires are said to lust after women – virgins in particular in Bulgaria.

There are many ways to become a vampire in Slavic countries, including being excommunicated or living a sinful life. Some signs appear as soon as a baby takes its first breath; sure traits are if a child is born with teeth, a caul or even a tail. Social taboos often beget vampires. For instance, the kruvnik of Russia is created when an individual is not mourned sufficiently, if burial practices were not carried out properly, or if the person was killed or committed suicide – a widespread belief across many regions. Strangely, if accepted and loved by its partner in life for three years after it returns, this creature can become human once more and shed its monstrous form. This type of vampire can only be killed by beheading, and the severed head should be placed between its legs when reburied, and its hands and feet removed.

The Bulgarian vapir is also created if burial rites are not carried out properly – for example, if the corpse is not washed after death. The list of crimes that lead to becoming a vapir after death is long, and includes drunkards, thieves and witches. Only a vampire hunter can kill this creature, by either bottling it, or by driving a stake through its heart.

The jedogonja is a vampire from Serbia that spreads disease. It is covered in hair, has red eyes, and feeds on the blood of livestock as well as acquaintances from life. One way to identify a jedogonja is to lead a horse or ox across a graveyard, as they will refuse to walk over the grave of any such creature. In more southern areas, the grave of a revenant is marked out when crows avoid flying near it.

In Poland, the word 'lupi' means both wolf and vampire. Another term for both is 'vudkolak', which translates to 'wolf's hair', and it's said that anyone who was a werewolf in life will become a revenant after death, changing into its werewolf form to hunt during a full moon. However, a bird flying over the corpse can also create a vudkolak. To avoid this, the family will keep vigil over a body to watch over their loved one. Meanwhile, in Serbia the vukodlak is similar, but will take the form of a bloated human with reddish skin and a blood-soaked mouth.

The link between werewolves and vampires is common. In the 18th century, plague was rife across the Slavic countries, and folk tales told how it was spread by the undead who had been werewolves when living. As late as the 19th century, neighbours burned each other alive on the charges of being vampires during a cholera epidemic in the east.

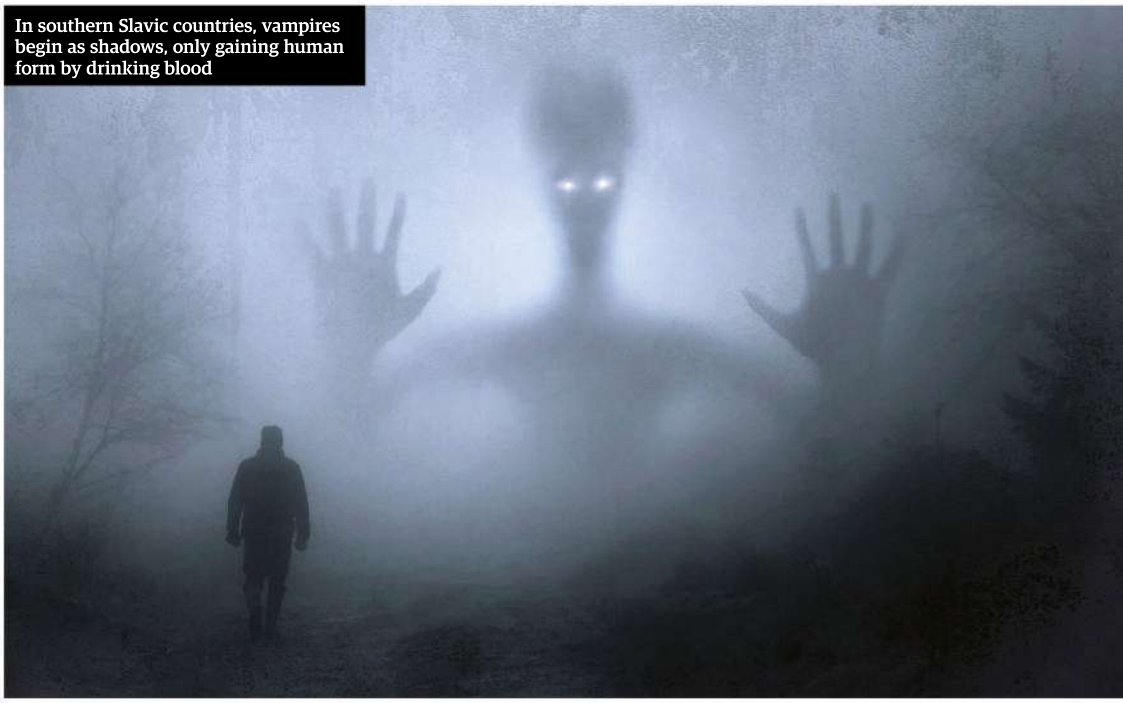
In related lore, Greece has more types of vampires than anywhere else in the world, with a history stretching right back to antiquity. Most Greek vampires are undead, being a person who was excommunicated or led a very sinful life. Until recently, the Greeks believed in the barabarlakos or vrykolakas, a terrifying reanimated human corpse, looking much as it did in life, yet with its skin drawn tight across its body. Some say this creature swells after feeding, becoming bloated with human blood. Redheads are said to be prime contenders for being this type of creature.

While the vrykolakas does drink blood, it's much better known for its other vampire-like traits: its body does not succumb to decay, and this pristine corpse rose from the grave at night to roam, leaving the soil appearing completely untouched. The vrykolakas then knocks on doors and calls out the names of the unfortunate occupants - a favourite pastime of Jure Grando, the first vampire of Croatia, showing how widespread these beliefs became.

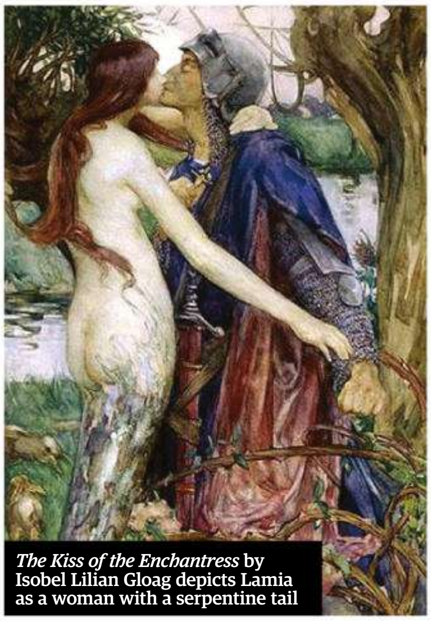
Whoever is careless enough to answer their door after the first knock is sure to die within a few days and become undead themselves. However, that is unless they suffered another possible fate: being immediately pushed to the floor, with the vrykolakas crushing their chest until they were dead and he could drain the blood from their body. Rest assured, if you wait for a second knock, the creature will move on to the next house, hence the Greek tradition of never answering the doorbell first time. This is also the possible origin of the belief that vampires can only enter a house if invited over the threshold.

Unlike other vampires, even the sight of this foul creature can cause immediate death. Similar

> During the Inquisition, more than 30,000 people were burned as werewolves, to stop them rising as vampires after death



In southern Slavic countries, vampires begin as shadows, only gaining human form by drinking blood



The Kiss of the Enchantress by Isobel Lilian Gloag depicts Lamia as a woman with a serpentine tail

Vampiric creatures of Greek myth

We see the precursors of modern vampires in Ancient Greek myth, with vampiric traits in three hellish monsters

The Empusae were daughters of Hecate. Both demonic and seductive, they would devour travellers and lie with a man until they had sucked every last drop of his vital force. It is said that they had the buttocks and thighs of asses, and brass slippers like Hecate herself. Or one leg of an ass and the other of brass, because the ass symbolises debauchery and brutality. They were thought to have originated in Palestine as the hellish daughters of the Lilith, Hecate's Jewish equivalent. Some say they also took the form of dogs or cows.

Lamia was a similar creature. Originally the ruler of Libya, and a love and battle goddess, she was the lover of Zeus, who bestowed the gift of allowing her to remove her eyes at will. She suffered the fate of having all of her children except one (the fearsome Scylla) jealously killed by Hera. In her pain, Lamia was transformed into a hideous creature, and would prey on the children of others. As she did, her face transformed into a nightmarish mask. Like the Empusae, she was later also said to lasciviously seduce men and suck their blood as they dreamed. Over time, Lamia evolved into a type of monster, and the only way to ward off such a monster was to hurl insults at it, resulting in it hiding and beginning to screech.

Continuing the bird-related theme, the striges were said to be huge, blood-drinking birds who fill the marshes of Hades with their terrible screams. With huge heads, sharp claws, and transfixed owl-like eyes, these birds originally hung upside down at night, with a screech that presaged warfare and death. They later became monsters that would kidnap and disembowel children.

In Bulgaria, vampires are seductive creatures who lust after virgins

Kringa today, the Croatian home of Jure Grando in the 17th century

In Serbia, a horse will never cross the grave of a jedogonja vampire

to the dreaded mare of German legend, they also wait until nightfall, when they creep into bedrooms and sit heavily on a victim's chest until the sleeper takes one final breath and succumbs to the weight of this nightmarish fiend.

It's quite easy to become a vrykolakas, and while they are most often created after living a sinful life, being buried in unconsecrated ground or being excommunicated from the Church, the fateful deed could be something as innocent as eating lamb killed by a wolf or werewolf, being murdered, or having a cat jump over your corpse. The only way to overcome this type of creature is to corner it while it's resting in its grave, and burn it until it turns to ashes entirely.

While there are many recent tales, the legends of vampire-like creatures stretch back over many millennia. It was common for people to be buried upside down, while flexed bodies were weighed down with stones as early as the Neolithic, presumably to stop loved ones rising from their graves as revenants. The auroi was a vampiric ghost of Ancient Greece, cursed to roam the Earth if a person died before their allotted time. The spirit could be enslaved using the right spell, and its magic harnessed to do the bidding of whoever had power over it. However, there was one caveat - this magic would only last until the time of the soul's fated time of death.

Conversely, the erinnye had hair of snakes and fiery eyes, solely killing murderers who deserved such a death, but only after driving them to madness. Controlled by the Fates, the ker was said to be a female spirit who had escaped her funeral jar, again only draining the blood of those who deserve it, as well as the dying on the battlefield. She would let out chilling shrieks before dragging her victims off by their feet to Hades, and the gods would roam the battlefields to keep them at bay.

The keres appear in Homer's *Iliad* as goddesses - or fates - of death, similar to harpies. Homer describes a 'baleful ker' in his description of the Shield of Heracles.

Said to have large wings, claws and fangs, their clothing is often soaked with blood. Anthesteria was a festival dedicated to Dionysus at the beginning of spring, which had elements of a festival of the dead, where the keres were also honoured to appease them and stop their attacks. Tar would be painted on door frames to keep this creature at bay - acting like vampiric fly-paper, the fiend would become stuck and unable to escape.

Vampires are a relatively modern creature, with a history dating back only a few centuries, yet the fear of blood-sucking creatures that steal the very life-essence of man can be traced back millennia, and they appear even in our earliest legends.

From their roots in classical and Near Eastern myth, tales of vampires have grown in the dark villages of the Slovene hills, and crept into the imaginations like the mists that roll across the bleak plains from Belarus to Russia, pervading the nightmares of children and adults alike, as each watches, waiting fearful, for the knock-knocking to come at their own door, deep in the night.

Vampires or victims of illness?

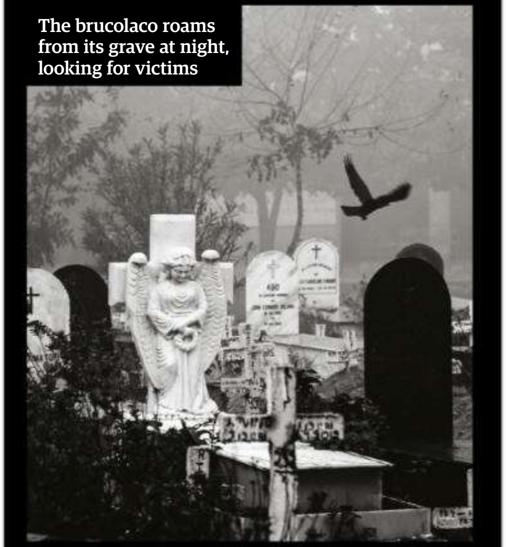
People suffering from long-term health conditions were burned as monsters, to stop them rising from the grave

In more modern times, there are a number of names for vampire-like creatures in Greece, yet little has been recorded about many of them: the elusive alitos of Kithnos, which may relate to the ancient alytos referring to their 'undissolved' bodies.

In the Epirus and Thessaly regions, if a person was unfortunate enough to become catatonic, feel waxy and be unresponsive to pain – which we now know can be caused by ailments like epilepsy or Parkinson's disease – they were thought to be cursed by God into becoming a brucolaco if they died.

Often, the skin would be stretched over its body so tightly that it would sound like a drum if slapped. This creature would roam at night, shrieking like a banshee, and anyone hearing its cries would succumb to plague. The revenant will once more find peace if it is decapitated, its head boiled in wine and its body cremated.

The brucolaco roams from its grave at night, looking for victims



This vampire wails like the Irish banshee, causing death to anyone who hears it

Shroud eaters and seduction

Have you heard of the bell-ringing fiends of Germany? How about the Romanian witches who cast out their souls at night to drink the blood of their victims?

Words by **Dee Dee Chainey**

GERMANY
ROMANIA

Both Romania and Germany have a long history of vampires, but while they have a torridly intertwined relationship through history, their vampire traditions differ dramatically. The creature takes many nefarious forms in both countries, yet the most infamous is Bram Stoker's Dracula, who many believe is inspired by Vlad the Impaler.

But this tale is only the culmination of a bounty of folk tales surrounding the dreaded beast, handed from generation to generation; a body of legends that has been irreparably changed by German film and fiction. The origins of the Dracula-style vampire, and its claim to a long history in Romania, are hazy - the nosferatu are thought to be just one of the popular types, and it is in fact said by many that the strigoi are the most famous, with the moroi secondary to these.

There are a number of types of vampire in Romania, and all types would meet at night with witches and wizards to plan the mischief and havoc they would wreak on mankind that evening. Almost anyone could become one through no fault of their own - particularly women. In fact, it was so commonplace that a saying developed in the region that vampires were once almost as numerous as 'blades of grass'.

It seems from Romanian folklore that strigoi and moroi could mean both living and dead vampires, yet this varies from one tale to the next. For many, strigoi means only a reanimated corpse, like the Greek vrykolaka. Others say it can be used to mean a witch or wizard who sends out their soul at night to do harm. Some say moroi are always living vampires, and are either the offspring of a nosferat vampire - or indeed of two strigoi - born with a wild mop of hair that they keep for their entire lives, or inversely completely bald males.

The moroaica are their more common female counterparts, who strangely possess two hearts, wild red hair, pale blue eyes and dry patches of red skin on their faces. This type of vampire doesn't always drink blood, but does drain the life-force from anyone unlucky enough to be its victim, and is skilled in magic and the black arts. After death, they too become strigoi, destined to rise each night from the grave for eternity. The strigoi are thought to be the most common vampire - the reanimated corpses of the dead who roam the land every night except Saturdays, when they rest in their graves.

In Romania, 'good vampires' could return to look after their children or do household chores like chop wood

© Ian Hinley

Strigoi rise from the grave each night for eternity

Vampires are most likely to appear around Saint Andrew's Eve and Christmastide in Romania, with Easter and Pentecost following close behind. In Romanian burial tradition, every grave was opened years after death - seven years for the elderly, five for youths and three for children - to see if the corpse had indeed transformed into the undead, before being ceremonially washed in both water and wine. They would be reburied if only bones remained, as this meant that the soul had gone on to everlasting life in Heaven. There is a belief that the soul does not leave the body until 40 days after death, or even later than this; and until it leaves, the body will be preserved and not decay.

Like other Slavic vampires, the undead in Romania can appear red and swollen after feeding, with talon-like fingernails, often sitting up in their grave and foully resisting being put out of their misery with force. One foot will sometimes be awkwardly jammed up in the corner of the grave, as a sign of their foul nature. In this region, too, horses will not pass over the burial place of these revenant fiends, and ganders behave similarly.

> In 1801, the bishop of Siges petitioned Wallachia's ruler to forbid the people from exhuming supposed vampires

Strangely, the creatures should be staked through the bellybutton as well as the heart - or the heart itself can be removed and either burnt or boiled. While the standard methods of vampire dispatch apply, here they can also have forks inserted through their eyes, heart and chest, and be reburied facing into the earth - a sure-fire way to end their devilish wanderings.

Here, it was believed that anyone predestined to become a revenant had special powers while still alive because of it. Foremost was the ability to cast their spirit from their body at night and go off to cavort with witches and the undead, often at crossroads, places where neither dogs bark nor cuckoos sing, in churchyards, derelict houses, or in the midst of the darkest forests. The strigoi could also be a witch who could cast her soul out to drink the blood of humans or animals, which they would bite just above the heart or, strangely, right between the eyes. Able to take on the power of animals, they would leave their houses through the chimney, returning ragged and dirty the following morning. The soul would often take the form of a fly, or shape-shift into a different animal form at will. They also had the power to call up the rain, as well as dry a mother of her milk, or even drain a neighbour's cow by enchanting their heifer to release the milk of their neighbour's herd when milked.

Living strigoi would, of course, remain revenant strigoi after their death, continuing to gain sustenance from the blood of the living - including their own relatives. Once they had fed on their kin, they would next kill local residents and their animals. Only then would the creature be able to move to another country, regaining their humanity to marry and sire progeny, who would too become vampires after their death. In some areas it was believed that after death, vampire spirits would be incarnated as death's-head hawkmoths, made infamous from their connection with the haunting film *Silence of the Lambs* (1991). Traditionally, people followed the custom of impaling these poor creatures on a pinhead and fixing them to a wall to contain them.

Unlike in other countries, where being born with a caul is lucky, being born with a piece of membrane covering or attached to the head in Romania is a sure sign of being a vampire that will lead to transforming within six weeks of death, as is having an extra appendage like a tail or wayward nipple, being a particularly hairy baby, or being born prematurely or outside of marriage. If an individual knew that they fell into one of these categories, they would usually leave instructions that their body should be treated with suspicion after death and the appropriate measures taken. Suicides should be immediately exhumed after burial and the necessary rituals undertaken.

Again, in the UK being a seventh child is a good omen, but in Romania means you could be a vampire - if, of course, your siblings were all boys or all girls. The most random way of becoming a vampire in this region surely has to be if a black cat jumps in front of a pregnant woman, if she

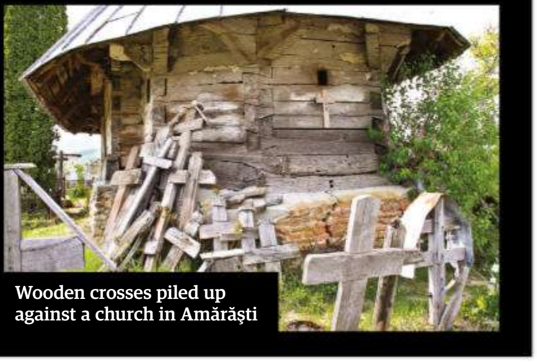
The vampiric grandmother of Amărăşti

Releasing a mother's spirit from her fate as a vampire who murdered her own kin

One of the most striking vampire tales comes from the southern village of Amărăşti in around 1890. The elderly mother of Dinu Gheorghiţa and his brother died. Soon after, the children of the elder brother began to die and after this, the children of the younger too went to their graves. In despair, the brothers' thoughts went immediately to their dead mother. Could she have turned into a dreaded vampire?

To make sure that the old woman was not indeed the walking dead, returning to the families' homes to kill those she left behind, the brothers dug up her body and cut her clean in two. But the deaths continued. The brothers dug up her body once more, only to find the corpse without a wound and entirely in one piece. Then they did what any good sons might when faced with such a misfortune: they took their mother's body into the forest and built a fire under the greatest tree they could find - of course - disembowelling her corpse, before plucking out her bleeding heart, quartering it, and flinging it into the flames.

Mixing the ashes with water, they bade their children to drink as a talisman against harm. They burnt the body entirely and buried the ashes. No more of their children died and it seems their mother's spirit walked no longer.



Wooden crosses piled up against a church in Amărăşti

If only bones remained when a body was exhumed, the soul had gone to heaven

The nachzehrer would chew on its burial shroud after death

refuses to eat salt, or if she catches sight of another vampire during her term - then the baby will also be a vampire.

The pricolici are shape-shifting vampires that often have a wolf-like form in their natural state, and are sometimes born with tails - the source of their power. Also called tricolici or triccolitch, they are similar to the Slavic vukudlak and can appear as a dog or pig. They are said to be unbaptised children - a common belief - yet also created at the death of anyone who burns a porridge spoon on purpose, or sweeps dust from the door into the setting sun. You have been warned. This type can be easily linked to the German werewolf, the prikolitsch.

After death, vampire spirits would be incarnated as death's-head hawkmoths

Vampire-like creatures in Germany are particularly malevolent. While alps are incubi that drink human blood during sleep, nachzehrer are more sinister by far. Being undead, they are more like traditional vampires - they drain the living to survive, yet are said by some to never leave their graves holding their thumb, with one eye open, obviously a favourite pastime for an idle, interred nachzehrer just looking to pass the time. Indeed, they sit in their burial place, gnawing at their burial shrouds - technically called 'manducation' - and even devouring their own bodies. A horrific guzzling sound can be heard by anyone unwittingly passing by their grave as they chew.

Rather than murderous rampages and a thirst for blood, this critter was famous for spreading disease and killing their family members, sometimes draining their energy through black magic - the relative's energy would deplete with each bite of its own body the nachzehrer took. Some say that once it had eaten itself, the creature would move on to killing its kin. Strangely, the cure for this creature was to disinter the body and then fill its mouth - with a coin, a stone, or even soil - so that it would be unable to chew, and slowly starve to death. Their heads can also be chopped off.

While this may sound stranger than fiction, some convincing theories abound to explain how this legend emerged, including blaming scavengers for devouring the corpse, and that cloth can become worn when the corpse leaks purge fluid, blamed on the revenant gnawing at its shroud. These too were able to shape-shift, this time transforming into a bat or pig, which enabled them to roam around undetected, and even fly up to the church bell tower. The fiend would ring the sacred bell and anyone within hearing distance would mysteriously succumb to death.

Another type of German vampire, the upier amuses itself with a similar bell-ringing activity, but in this case it will shout out the names of unwitting community members, all of whom will, of course, promptly die. If you are lucky enough to escape this deadly name-calling, watch out between midday and midnight as the ghoul roams the roads, looking for victims to impale on its barbed tongue, in order to drain them of their blood, only to regurgitate this into their coffin later to take a sanguinary blood bath. To destroy this fiend, simply burn its body to ash. But be warned: it will explode into thousands of maggots, each of which must be recovered and squished, or else the dreaded upier will rise once more to life.

The film *Nosferatu* made this creature one of the most famous vampires hailing from Romania

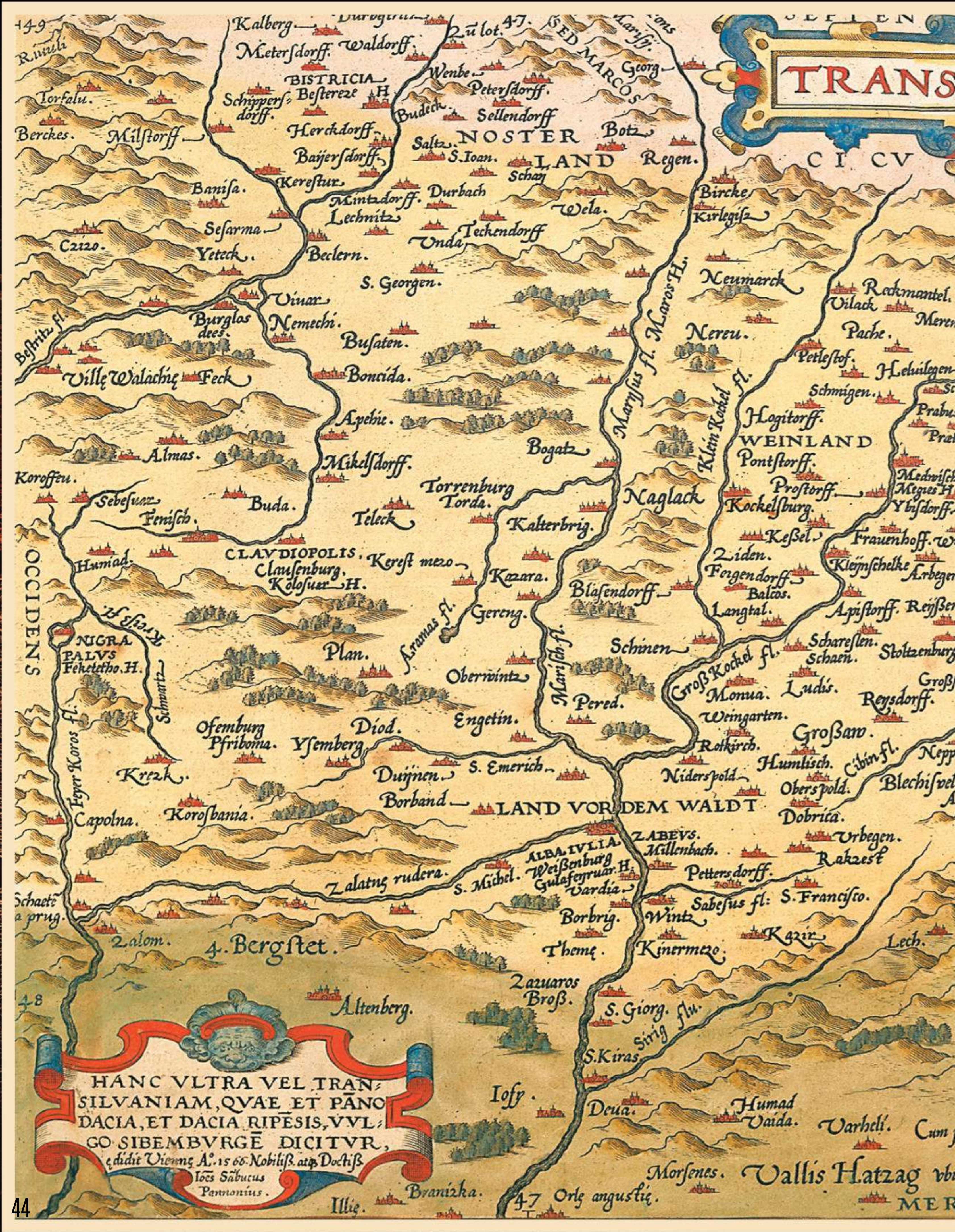
Nosferatu: fact or fiction?

The nosferat is one of the most famous vampires, but is this reputation justified?

One of the most infamous vampires today, the nosferatu did indeed exist in Romanian folklore as a type of incubus and a blood-sucking vampire. While many people find it strange that it receives no mention in early Romanian folklore accounts, others have suggested it was a figure well-known by locals.

It shot to fame with the 1922 German film *Nosferatu* by FW Murnau, set in the Carpathians. The folkloric nosferat or nosferatu is an alluring revenant of either sex. The transformation into one of these creatures is strongly linked to being illegitimate. Choosing at least one lover whom it often makes infertile, it rises from its burial place each night to return and drink their blood again and again, until the victim succumbs to death or sexual exhaustion from the orgastic energy of the vampire beau. It will often prey specifically on newlyweds, and anyone unfortunate enough to be killed by the ghoul is cursed to become a blood-sucking revenant themselves.

When the sun sets above the Carpathian Mountains in Romania, monsters walk the land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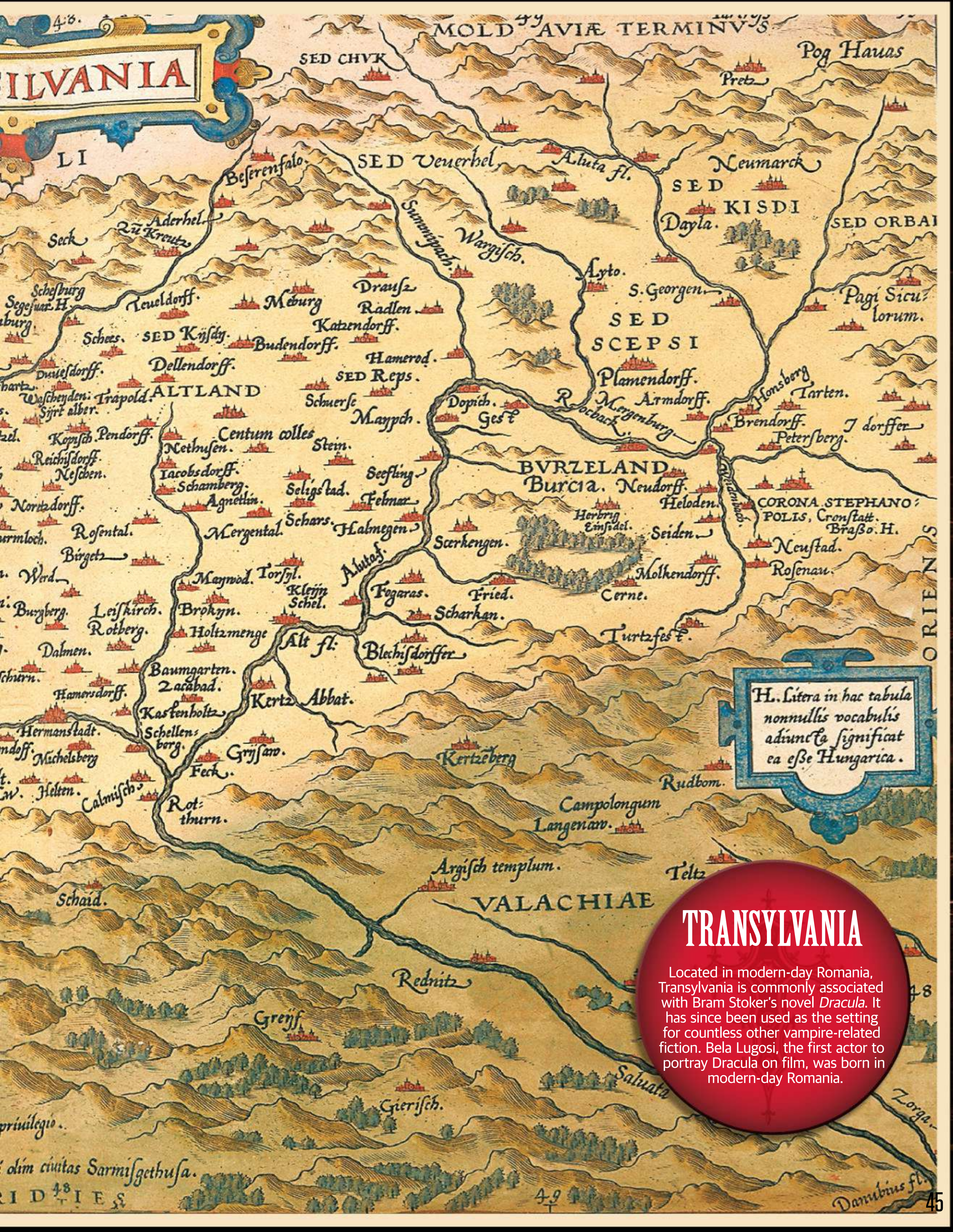

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TRANSYLVANIA

Located in modern-day Romania, Transylvania is commonly associated with Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*. It has since been used as the setting for countless other vampire-related fiction. Bela Lugosi, the first actor to portray Dracula on film, was born in modern-day Romania.

Medieval menace or literary fiend?

The rugged UK is filled with chilling accounts of Medieval revenants and terrifying tales of shadowy ghouls that stalk the living through cemeteries at night

Words by **Dee Dee Chainey**

UNITED KINGDOM

While the UK might not be the first place that comes to mind when thinking about vampires, it has more than its fair share of individual vampire stories. The United Kingdom has contributed greatly to literary vampire traditions - let's not forget that Bram Stoker's Dracula himself, while hailing from Transylvania, was shipwrecked in Yorkshire, thus making Whitby the dark, mysterious town that it is renowned for today, with its spooky abbey and regular goth festival.

While the first piece of vampire fiction didn't hit the British public until the beginning of the 19th century with John Polidori's work *The Vampyre* - initiated at the same infamous get-together that launched Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* - the UK's vampiric history goes as far back as the Middle Ages, with historians detailing gruesome tales of revenants in 12th-century Latin manuscripts. These recount half-forgotten snippets passed down from the Anglo-Saxons about the dead rising from their graves to walk the earth at the Devil's whim. Most of our accounts come directly from just a few sources, mainly from two 12th-century men: Walter Map, who wrote *De Nugis Curialium* (*Trifles of Courtiers*), and William of Newburgh.

© Ian Hinley

The door to one of the crypts was ajar, with all the coffins bar one completely destroyed

The Vampire of Croglin Grange

Whether fact or fiction, the tale of this creature is more than enough to cause nightmares

Hailing from Cumberland in the north of England, this story first appeared in the 1890s, yet many suggest it dates back to the 17th century. One night, Miss Amelia Cranswell saw two burning lights from her window in Croglin Grange. Locking the latch with fear, she crawled into bed, only to soon awaken to a fearful sight: the burning red eyes of a towering figure glaring through the window at her.

Soon it began to pick at the lead with its thin, clawed hands, and let itself into her room. The girl was petrified with fright as the creature grabbed her by the hair and sunk its teeth into her neck. Her piercing scream alerted her brothers, who knocked down the door, only to find the girl lying on the bed with blood pumping from her neck. The assailant fled through the window. All he left behind was the putrid smell of decay, and the brothers could do little but bandage their sister's wound, and try to save her life.

The girl did indeed survive and was taken to Switzerland to recover. The boys swore their revenge and soon returned to Croglin Grange to lay a trap for the fiend – with their sister as bait. The vampire did return but fled once more into darkness, wailing. The next day, a band of people took to the graveyard, only to find a disturbed crypt. Inside, each coffin was smashed and filled with gnawed bones – all except one. When opened, the very same fiend lay inside, skin brown and papery, and body filled with gunshot wounds. The group took the corpse outside and burnt it into ash.

The vampires of both Buckingham and Berwick rose from their graves each night to torment the living

William of Newburgh gives us accounts of nightmarish revenants roaming after death and causing devilish mischief. The first of these was in Buckingham, reliably recounted by the archdeacon of the region. A man's body was placed in the family sepulchre on the eve of Ascension Day but the next night he appeared in his wife's bedchamber and – like the sinister vrykolakas of Greek legend – lay upon her, crushing the very breath out of her body. The fiend returned and inflicted the same cruelty the following eve.

In terror, on the third night, the wife surrounded herself with people as she lay in her bed, waiting for her vile husband to reappear – which, of course, he did. But he fled at the shouts of the onlookers and instead crept into the silent homes of his brethren on the same road. They too followed the same practice of surrounding themselves with people to watch over them, and again, the villainous revenant fled into the night. This time, he was left only to trouble the pets and animals of the fields, which went wild at the sight of him.

Soon, the townsfolk had taken their fill of this mischief and decided that every house should keep watch each night. Finally, they turned to the Church for guidance and the bishop of Lincoln was petitioned for advice. The bishop, being astonished but not unfamiliar with such accounts in Britain, recognised that previous cases showed the man's body must be burned, yet considered this indecent. He decreed that the body should be inspected and then the tomb tightly sealed with the bishop's letter placed on his chest. This was done, and while the man's body was found lying fully intact as the day he had been buried, once the letter had been placed upon him the foul creature roamed no more.

A similar account was given in Berwick, when a rich man was buried but compelled by Satan to leave the confines of his grave each night, pursued by barking dogs wherever he went, until he returned to his deathly home once more before daybreak. The locals were so terrified that they shuttered themselves inside each night. After ardent investigations, it was decided that something must be done for fear of the corpse spreading a pestilence among the living. Ten strong men were tasked with exhuming the man, dismembering the body and feeding it into the fire to end this curse on the town – as indeed the fiend himself had recommended to anyone unfortunate enough to meet him in his wanderings. Yet while this demon was never seen again, a plague like never before raged through the populace, claiming them as his victims from beyond the grave.

> By 1924, anyone who professed to being a vampire in the United Kingdom was placed in an asylum

Whitby Abbey's spooky atmosphere, with rolling mists and swooping bats, was the perfect place for Bram Stoker to develop his ideas for *Dracula*

Many other stories of the undead can be found in Britain. The tale of the Alnwick Castle vampire tells of a depraved Yorkshireman who fell from a roof at the shock of seeing his wife in the arms of another man. The local priest knew he'd led a sinful life, and begged him to confess his sins before death, but to no avail – the man died unshriven. He soon returned from his grave, spreading disease throughout the local area, and wherever he went a foul stench followed that pervaded all. The town's dogs would howl all night as he battered upon door after door, and people cowered inside from dusk until dawn broke and safety of daylight returned.

Finally, a local priest gathered a group together to decide what should be done, but two rogue boys decided to take matters into their own hands. When they unearthed the body, it was swollen red with puffed-out cheeks, engorged with the blood of its victims. Reports say that warm blood flowed from it when stabbed with a shovel, so they knew once and for all that the creature had indeed been drinking blood on its nightmarish rampage. Like in many similar stories, after cremating the body to dust on a pyre, the corpse walked no more and the plague subsided.

Revenants are fairly common on the borders of Scotland. A scandalous priest was said to have returned as a revenant at Melrose Abbey in the 11th century. In life, he was famous for riding out on

The Hunderprest was said to be able to transform into a bat

the hunt with a pack of dogs, and so he was given the nickname Hunderprest, meaning 'dog priest'. In death, he was cursed to drink human blood and was even said to transform into a bat in classic vampire style. All was well, with the Hunderprest thoroughly enjoying his sanguine japes – that was until he started lusting after his former paramour. The monks decided that enough was enough. One night, they lay in wait at his burial place, striking the fiend down with an axe. They then burned his body. Unlike with other vampires, the ghost of the villainous Hunderprest is said to still haunt Melrose Abbey today.

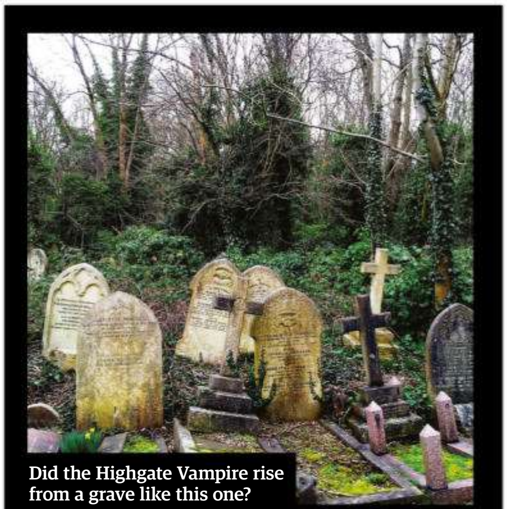
Walter Map's 12th-century text was translated from the original Latin by the infamous ghost-story writer MR James, who added his own particular flair for the morbid and uncanny to the text in a series of extensive notes that would keep the most straight-laced people watching for shadows at night. Much of Montague Summer's work was also based on these earlier texts.

It seems that early on, vampires were known to cavort in groups along with other creatures. In one account from North Ledbury during the 11th century, Edric Wilde, a soldier, peeked through a window to see a group of otherworldly women, who reminded him of troops of demons, vampires and dryads – well known at the time for frolicking at night in the company of the goddess Dictinna or Diana. Indeed, folklore tells that anyone who sees such demons like these cavorting is doomed to die. The soldier immediately fell in love with one of the women, despite his worries. He later married one of them, only for her to disappear afterwards. The tale is told as a warning against such succubi. In another tale, a man buries his wife, only to later find her revelling with a troop of dancers. The woman goes on to bear more children with him after her death, all of whom were known as the sons of the dead woman – leaving no doubt of her unearthly existence.

The Latin term 'sanguisuga' is often used for such creatures, meaning 'leech' or 'blood-sucker'. While not all of these demons are said to drink blood, some accounts say that they notoriously slit the throats of babies, and they share many traits with other European vampires – for instance that their cadavers do not decay, the need to destroy the bodies to finally stop them rising from the grave, and also the fact that they can cause pestilence.

In Scotland, some have suggested that the baobhan sith should be considered to fall under the vampire category. These are lithe young women, often dressed in green robes that hide the feet as they actually have the hooves of a deer, which alludes to the hulder of Scandinavian legend. They are known to entice victims into their dances and seduce them before drinking blood from their necks. These creatures can also shape-shift to take the form of a crow or raven.

While the UK does not have the wealth of vampire lore of many other countries, there are enough early tales of the fiends to suggest that they were indeed known within these isles, and still very much feared just as much as their Eastern European counterparts.



Did the Highgate Vampire rise from a grave like this one?

The infamous Highgate Vampire

A modern menace, this fiend shot to the top of the UK's undead A-list in 1969

This London revenant's claim to fame began when dead animals – completely drained of their blood – started to appear in Highgate Cemetery. Soon, sightings of a tall, shadowy figure began to emerge. These accounts snowballed quickly, and one eyewitness reports being transfixed by the creature's strange stare, becoming so confused that he struggled to find his way out of the burial ground. He was completely petrified as the figure stood before him, only to disappear into thin air without inflicting harm.

Vampire hunters soon swarmed to the cemetery, digging up a number of graves. Heritage buffs and conservationists were in turmoil and, terrified that the cemetery's monuments should be harmed and burials desecrated, they campaigned for the site to be locked at night. So unlike other revenants, his body was neither burned nor decapitated. While the sightings soon faded into history, might the Highgate Vampire still be lurking, winding his way through mausoleums and brambles, hunting for creatures in the dark?

Some reported the Highgate Vampire as a shadowy figure, while others said he had a hypnotic gaze

Murderous mothers and infanticide

The vampires of India and the Far East are some of the most shocking creatures on the planet, drinking the blood of newborns and feasting on children

Words by **Dee Dee Chainey**

The vampires of legend in India and the Far East are more akin to the female vampires of Greek myth: wronged-women-turned-monstrous-fiend, set to wreak havoc on the populace in revenge. In contrast, European vampires take a very different form, conjuring images of seductive, shadowy gents, or bloated corpses that spread pestilence. Many of the fiends in Southeast Asia have tragic backstories, and we can't help being torn between disgust and a strange sympathy, transfixed by their gruesome tales and bloody deeds.

One of the most reminiscent of Greek tradition is the aswang of the Philippines, which comes in different types. A female vampire, the mandurugo type, is beautiful and seductive in daylight hours, yet at night she grows wings, and her tongue becomes long and hollow, giving her the stomach-churning ability to suck unborn children from their mothers' bodies. They are said to feast on innards, with the heart and liver being their favourite delicacy. Some stories describe them as black widows that gradually kill their husbands by drinking blood from their necks, night after night.

In contrast, the manananggal is similarly seductive but older, with the ability to split its body in half to enable it to soar about with the wings of a bat, sucking the blood of pregnant women with their tongues under cover of darkness. Anyone who eats cooked blood will turn into a manananggal, and the creature notoriously tricks people into just that fate.

There is now actually an aswang festival in Roxas City just before Halloween each year, created to dispel the legend of the creatures, where people dress up and attend balls and parades.

© Ian Hinley

The Chinese jiangshi

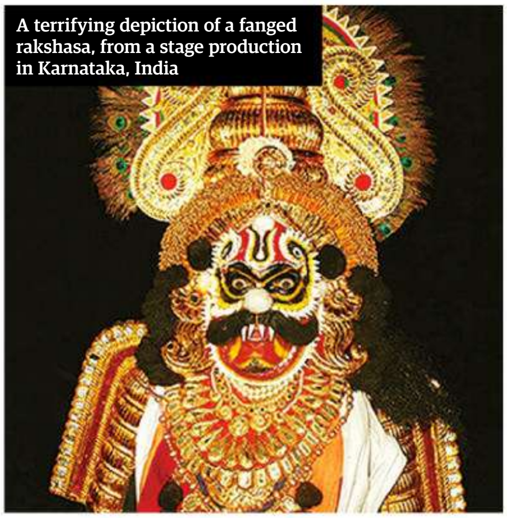
This Chinese vampire is famous for being magically resurrected by a sorcerer and then hopping along behind

China certainly has a strong tradition of outlandish fiends. Most often created in ways similar to that of European vampires – such as being jumped over by a cat, cursed, or dying far away from home – one of the strangest vampires known to man has to be the jiangshi or ching shih, or hopping vampire.

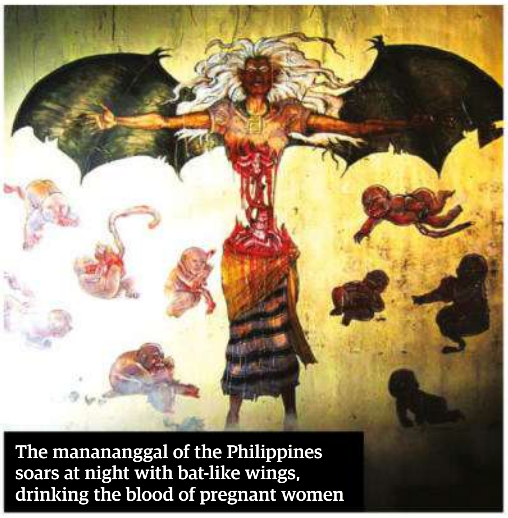
While the name might be somewhat comical, this fiend's nature is certainly not: it's notorious for sexually predating on women before feeding on their bodies. Like the Slavic revenants, the creature can shape-shift into a werewolf, tracking its prey like an animal, and is controlled by the moon's phases. It can only be killed by the loud firing noise of a gun.

While it has red eyes, greenish skin, and large teeth and nails, its most distinctive feature is certainly its mane of hair, which turns white at sexual maturity. This creature is indeed said to hop, one reason being that when a person died a long distance from home, the family would task a sorcerer with returning the corpse. To do this, a piece of paper with the person's name and birthday would be stuck to their face, at which they would rise from the grave and hop along behind the sorcerer. They would do this all the way home – unless, of course, they managed to break free and go on a murderous rampage instead, draining the life-force of anyone they came into contact with.

A traditional Chinese funeral from the turn of the century



A terrifying depiction of a fanged rakshasa, from a stage production in Karnataka, India



The manananggal of the Philippines soars at night with bat-like wings, drinking the blood of pregnant women

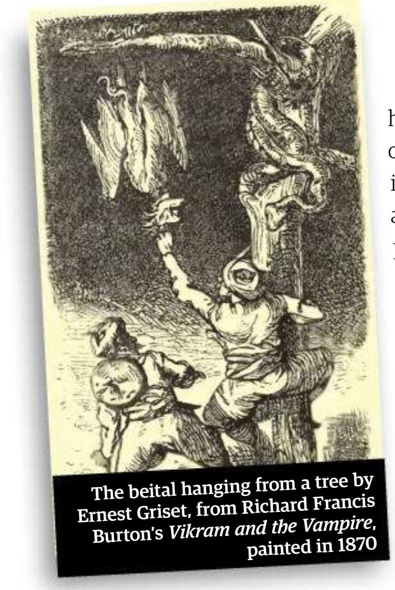
> "They were filled with bloodlust, and as soon as they gained life they began chewing on the god, who cried out"

Similar creatures also exist across other parts of Southeast Asia. In Cambodia, the ab or ap is a disembodied head that flies about at night. A living human during the day, through the night it seeks hearts, lungs and blood to gorge on, while some say it also feeds on faeces. In Malaysia and Indonesia, the penanggal is a similar creature that flies about with its stomach and entrails dangling below the head, which flickers brightly like fireflies. It drips poisonous bodily fluids that will make anyone it touches break out into sores.

These creatures can be young or old, but are often unfortunate women who have died in childbirth. While they can also be created with black magic, their favourite victims are pregnant mothers, women in labour and children – who they take great pleasure in killing. The only way to ward off the creature is to hang thistly plants around the door or roof to catch hold of the trailing innards as the demonic creature attempts to enter the house. The leyak from Bali is a similar disembodied head, but it also has shape-shifting abilities, sometimes appearing as a tiger, a monkey with gold teeth, a giant, a rat or bird, or even a corpse candle. This type spreads plague like its European counterparts. Only a blood sacrifice can stop it.

The langsuir of Malay folklore is similar for some people, being a woman who died from childbirth – sometimes from shock at birthing a stillborn. She is described as a woman wearing green with very long nails, black hair down to her feet, and very short – indeed only coming up to the waist of normal humans. That is unless she is caught drinking blood, at which her head will detach like the manananggal or ap. Her favoured meal is the blood of a newborn boy, sucking the blood from its neck. For others, however, this creature is one of the most loathsome and nefarious of all in Southeast Asia.

It is a vampiric creature conjured by a witch or wizard to do their bidding using black magic using the corpse of a relation, or even that of a stillborn baby. Their spirits are kept locked inside small bamboo boxes and often passed down through generations, bound to their masters as a familiar spirit. For sustenance, they can exist only on a diet of milk and eggs, and if these things are not given in great supply, they will feast on the bodies of children. They can shape-shift into animal form, and are called bàjang if they are male.



The beital hanging from a tree by Ernest Griset, from Richard Francis Burton's *Vikram and the Vampire*, painted in 1870

India certainly has its fair share of vampires, including those associated with pregnancy. The churel is a mother who has died in childbirth and has returned from the grave to wreak vengeance on her in-laws or relatives if wronged in life. A shape-shifter, this hag is thought to be incredibly ugly, with feet that point backwards and a black tongue, yet they can take the form of a beautiful girl. In this guise, she seduces unwitting men, sucking away their life-force until they appear old and withered. Similarly, the chedipe can be a woman who died in childbirth or was a devadasis - a young girl dedicated to the gods and forced to become a temple prostitute - usually also after an unnatural death.

These creatures magically unlock the doors of houses, which they enter fully unclothed. They then proceed to suck blood from the toes of the men of the house, along with their virility. They are likened to succubi in that they seduce the man of the house - a convenient excuse for infidelity - and often given as a reason for discord within the household. They infamously ride tigers under the moonlight, searching for prey, or can themselves shape-shift into a tiger, yet with one of their legs remaining strangely human. There is, unfortunately, no record of their gait when taking this odd form.

Some say that churels return from the grave specifically during the festival of Diwali, the Hindu festival of light

Many other types of vampire exist without the link to pregnancy. An ancient, mythical form of vampiric spirit, the rakshasa were demi-gods created from the breath of the god Brahma. They were filled with bloodlust, and as soon as they gained life they began chewing on the god, who cried out, causing Vishnu to banish the creatures to Earth for eternity. Adorned with claws and fangs, the rakshasa are seen as huge creatures with an insatiable need for human flesh, who drink human blood from skulls. The gruesome brahmaparusha also drinks from skulls and, more disturbingly, is said to have a hunger for brains, wearing intestines wrapped around its head like a crown.

Meanwhile, the baital (or vetala) is a creature first recorded in the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, and early depictions show it as half human and half bat, sanguinely drinking human blood from skull cups. It is known for reanimating corpses, and often hung upside down from trees in the jungle near graveyards. Legend tells that it requires sacrifices of human flesh, which it gleefully devours.

One of the most famous collections of Indian vampire tales set within a frame story is *Baital Pachisi*, retold by Richard Francis Burton as *Vikram and the Vampire* in 1870. Originally written in Sanskrit in the 11th century, these 25 tales recount the older legend of King Vikram, who sets out to capture a baital and deliver it to a sorcerer. However, the task proves more difficult than anticipated, for each time he attempts to take the creature to the sorcerer, the demon tells a story and poses a riddle. If the king does *not* know the answer, the creature concedes to go with him. This presents the king with a conundrum, for the fiend says the king's head will burst if he knows an answer but refuses to give it, yet if he does answer correctly the baital will fly away each time. Finally, at the last tale, Vikram truly doesn't know the answer, and is able to capture the creature and deliver him to the sorcerer.

But there is more to the tale: the creature tells Vikram that the sorcerer intends to sacrifice him to the gods by beheading him, in order to himself become the demon's master and have control over him. The only way to avoid this terrible plot is if Vikram first slays the sorcerer, which he does. The guardian deity Indra blesses him and he requests that the sorcerer be purified and resurrected, and that the vampire can help him when needed.

While vampires lurk in the darkest nights in both India and throughout the Far East in many forms, many of us might think twice before condemning them here. So many of these dreaded creatures are innocent victims of life themselves - young girls facing prostitution, mothers having died in childbirth, some from the shock of their own child being born lifeless. Now, after death, they are lumbered with an eternity of torment, wreaking havoc on the living at the whim of evil sorcerers, and hunted for being what nature and the tragedy of life has turned them into: monsters of the worst kind that prey on babes, sucking the unborn from their mother's wombs, cursed to drink the blood of the innocent forevermore.

The rolang will rampage across the mountains, destroying everyone in its path

The Tibetan rolang

Whether a zombie or vampire, this sinister creature of the Himalayas is stranger than fiction

In Tibet, the rolang is a creature called up from the grave by a dugpa or ngagspa - a sorcerer or witch. Similar to the Malay bàjang, it then follows every command of its master. While some consider this a zombie, it has similarities with European revenants: it's notorious for spreading pestilence, and is often someone who has led a sinful life - thus allowing a demonic spirit to take control of the corpse.

The tongue, black and protruding, is seen as the most powerful part of this creature, and it is highly coveted by sorcerers, who will raise the creature and try to take its tongue. Some say that if they fail to restrain it, the revenant will go on a murderous rampage, killing anyone it sees. In fact, anyone it touches will contract a deadly illness. Luckily, rolangs cannot bend at the waist, meaning that the low doorways of Tibetan houses offer some protection.

Rolangs are said to be impervious to even the coldest temperatures

"Their spirits are kept locked inside small bamboo boxes and often passed down through generations, bound to their masters"

Plague carriers and ice cannibals

From the New England Vampire Panic to the mysterious sorcerers of Mexico, the Americas are home to a myriad of vampires that come in the strangest forms

Words by **Dee Dee Chainey**

THE AMERICAS

Like in Asia, there is a history of vampires in the Americas that dates back centuries, with the earliest resembling the vengeful revenant mothers of the Far East. The Aztecs themselves believed in cihuateteo, the skeletal ghosts of pregnant women who would return as succubi, seducing men and driving them to insanity, and committing the worst crime: stealing children. In North America, vampire traditions are more akin to those of Europe, with elegant, seductive vampires rising from their graves to drink the blood of the living, spreading pestilence in their wake.

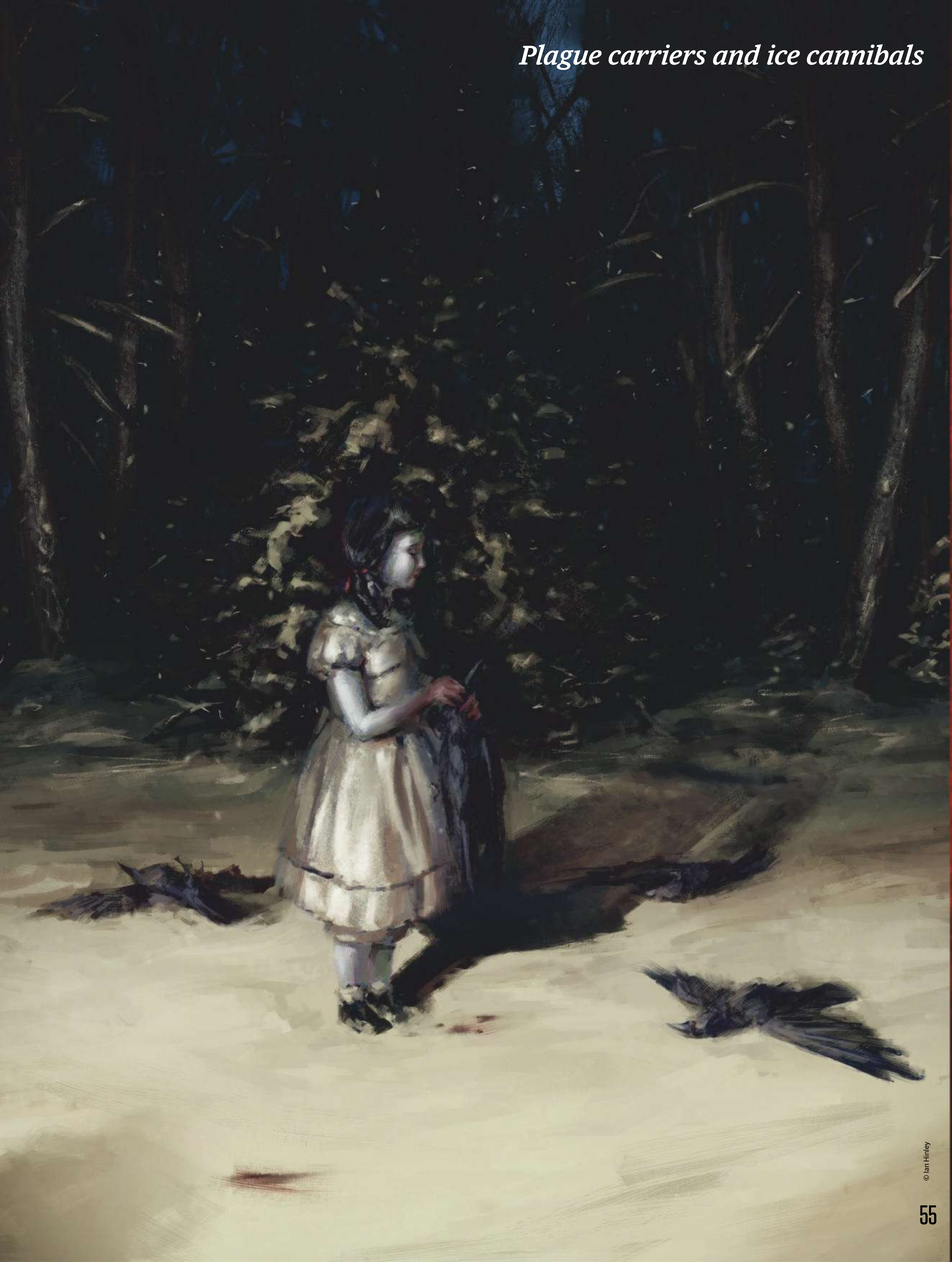
Less than two centuries after terror swept across the American Northeast with the Salem witch trials, a new threat emerged: vampires. Prior to what is now known as the New England Vampire Panic, a tuberculosis pandemic raged across the region, and was at its peak as the leading cause of death when vampire hysteria exploded in the 1800s, accounting for nearly 25 per cent of deaths in the region. An explanation was needed.

A fitting reason was that vampires, like their European counterparts, were rising from the graves to spread this disease. One such town afflicted by the horror was Jewett City, Connecticut, where a historical vampire hunt took place in 1854 when locals began to dig up the remains of their kin as suspected vampires. To end this scourge, the townsfolk beheaded the corpses to stop them rising as revenants, later reburying them.

The most gruesome detail of these happenings, however, is that many of these corpses have since been exhumed from New England and the surrounding area, many with damaged rib bones. This evidence is the epitome of the macabre tales, as it shows how people dug around in the chest cavity of their dead to remove the hearts, which needed to be burned to kill the vampires once and for all, and leave their spirits in peace.

> Public heart-burning ceremonies to halt vampires were common in New England in the 18th and 19th centuries

One of the most famous tales from the 19th century was that of Mercy Brown. Mercy's family were farming folk in the small town of Exeter, Rhode Island. This tragic tale begins when tuberculosis hit the Brown family in the early 1880s. First to die was Mary, the mother of the family. She was soon followed by her daughter, Mary Olive. Within ten years of when the tragedy first struck the family, Mercy herself, and her brother Edwin, both caught the illness. In the January of 1892, Mercy died at the age of just 19. A couple of months later, in March of the same year, neighbours petitioned her father, George, to allow the bodies of his relatives to be exhumed, to be checked for signs of vampirism. Strange as this seems, it was a widespread belief that a vampire could inflict such illness. Neighbours hoped to find the source of the scourge on the family in time to



© Ian Hinley

"She will transform into a monstrous one-legged creature with a hoof, like the baobhan sith of Scotland. Set on devouring them, she feasts on their flesh"

Native American vampires

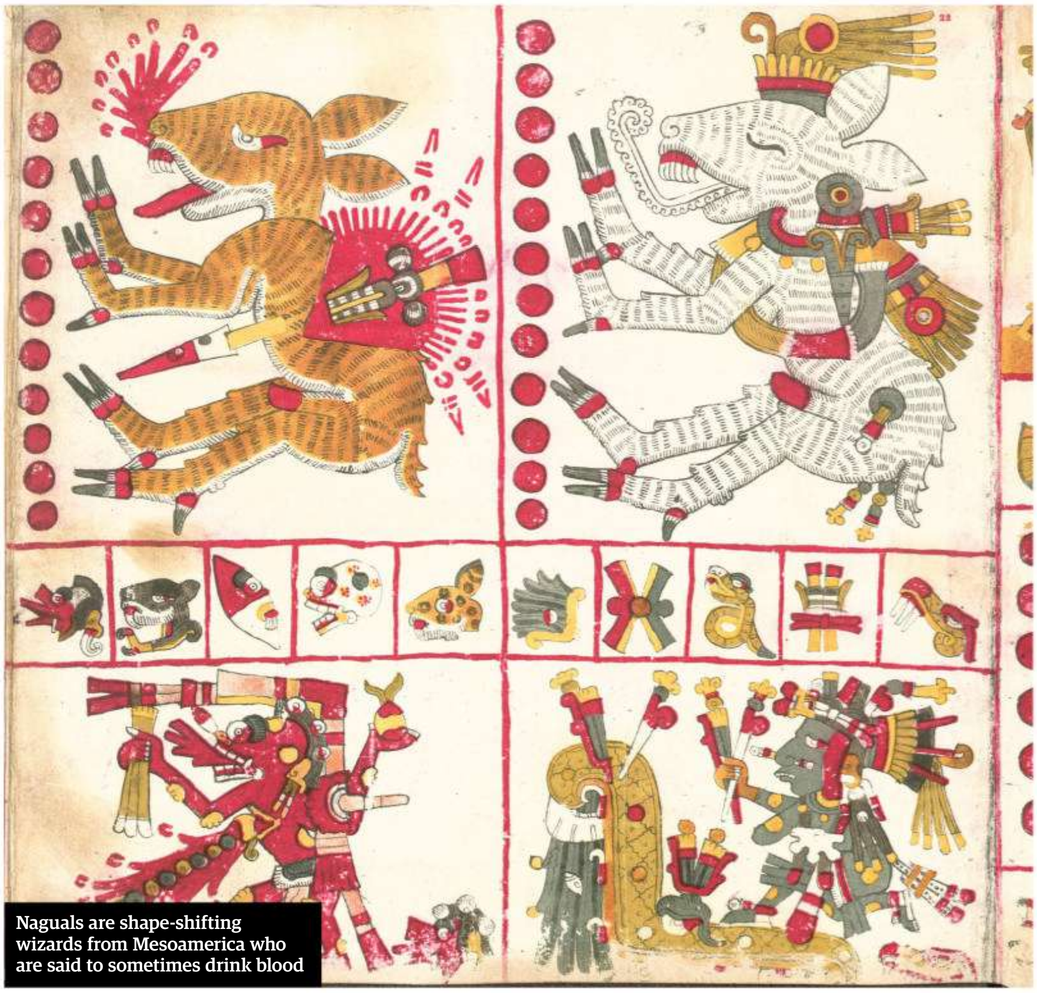
The fiends of the indigenous people of North America wander among the living, disguising their monstrous natures until night falls

The Seminole of Oklahoma and Florida tell of the stikini, who takes the form of a human by day, but an owl by night. A strange transformation, this creature vomits up its internal organs, hangs them in a tree, then flies off into the night to find its prey. Once a suitable victim presents itself, the were-owl reaches down their throat to tear out their heart, and carries it back to their lair to be boiled in a pot before devouring it. By morning, the creature will have regained its human form, and can once more walk – undetected – among the normal populace.

The Native American Choctaw, hailing from what is now the southeastern United States around the Mississippi River valley, have their own vampire legends. The skatene is a bloodcurdling vampire who is able to take the form of an owl. He appears as a friend, slowly gaining the confidence of all around them. Soon, however, they enact their nefarious plan: they sneak into a family's house at night and behead the father, carrying it off as a trophy.

While some think that this creature isn't actually based on traditional legends and developed later as a bogeyman, the fearsome windigo has a long history. This creature, also known as the ice cannibal, is famous in Chippewa and Algonquian legend. Like some European and Asian vampires, they are humans who take on a monstrous form after committing a mortal sin, often cannibalism, or through black magic, when their hearts turn to ice, and they hunger for human flesh forevermore.

Stikini vomit up their organs in order to shape-shift, and then hunt in darkness as owls



Naguals are shape-shifting wizards from Mesoamerica who are said to sometimes drink blood

save Edwin, whose condition had worsened to the extent that people were beginning to question whether a revenant was feeding on his life essence - yet the word 'vampire' itself was not actually used at the time. Neither father nor son attended the exhumations, and many have suggested that George did not believe in the folk superstition, but merely agreed to placate his friends, who were concerned about the illness spreading to their own families.

Mercy was the only corpse to pose a question. Her body had been kept above ground, in freezing winter temperatures, so when exhumed it was found that blood was still stored in her heart - the only answer to this was that she must be a vampire. In keeping with local practices and vampire remedies, the heart and liver were burned. The ashes were given to Edwin to drink with water in hope that it might help stave off his illness, since it was believed that while the undead's heart still contains blood, any ill relative would continue to grow worse. But it was to no avail: the boy died within just two months. The exhumation of Mercy's body made international headlines, and the country looked on in horror, considering the practices inhumane and old-fashioned with no place in modern society.

The legend of Mercy Brown the vampire has persisted to this day, and offerings are still left at her grave, the stone covered in graffiti, even after being stolen and replaced several times. Her ghost is still said to haunt Exeter, and anyone smelling the unmistakable scent of roses on a certain bridge in the town is said to have witnessed her spirit wandering restlessly, still waiting for peace to come to her.

Some say Bram Stoker based Lucy Westenra on Mercy Brown after reading newspaper reports about the case

While the tragic tales of Mercy and her contemporaries are typical of North American undead, further down the continent, Mesoamerican vampires are very different in nature. They are, in fact, shape-shifting wizards, yet here they are not just linked with wolves but can also appear as domestic animals like cats or dogs, as well as the more exotic jaguars and pumas. It is interesting that owls and bats are also on this list, and we can think to the classical striges who are linked with owls, as well as the vampiric bat-like fiends found across Europe and India.

The nagual, which can be a brujo or wizard, transforms into an animal - often a wolf or jaguar - to spread disease, and enjoys other devilish pastimes like playing tricks, stealing food, and enchanting its enemies. However, it is debatable whether this creature actually drinks blood. Some think the region's folk religion has been heavily influenced by European colonialist legends, particularly their vampire traditions, while others say shape-shifting creatures date back as far as the Olmec period. Whichever the case, the beliefs are still alive today.

It's thought that each person's soul has an animal counterpart, so the idea of shape-shifting is not a strange one. Aztec nagualism even had a patron god, Tezcatlipoca, whose sacred animal was a jaguar. The teyollohcuani, which dates back to at least 1561 in central Mexico, is a shape-shifting bloodsucker known for preying on humans, with close similarities to the traditional image of a vampire. Although it is not an undead creature, the teyollohcuani without doubt feeds on human blood, with human hearts as its chosen delicacy.

In contrast to the nagual, the teyollohcuani's favourite form to take is that of a bird, and stories tell it is a witch or wizard that flies into children's bedrooms under cover of darkness in the form of a turkey or vulture, and sucks their blood until they breathe their last breath. Strangely, some of these blood-sucking creatures seem to do this for good rather than evil. One tale, from the Chinantec people of Oaxaca, relates how one wizard took on feline form to creep up to a miscreant who had bewitched a sickly client of his. The wizard sucked out some of the miscreant's blood and later cured the sick man by having him drink the same blood.

South America has a rich history of vampires of a very different nature. The colo colo is a disgusting creature indeed, hailing from the Araucanian of Chile. Born of a cockerel's egg, the fiend creeps up to a sleeper and drains him of all energy by slurping up his saliva, at which the victim can wake with a fever, never to recover. There are regional Mapuche variations, yet this monster often appears as a feathered rat, or a snake with a rat's head, and is thought to wail like a child. Some say that the egg is merely a snake's egg, hatched by a rooster, and not a cockerel's egg at all.

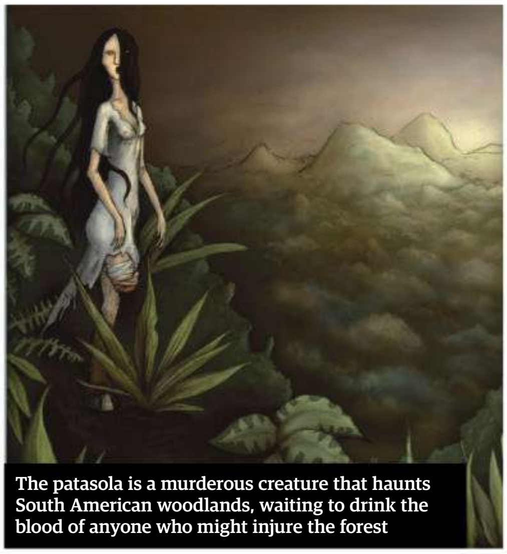
In contrast, the lobishomen of Brazil is more of a comic figure at only two inches tall and resembling a small monkey. However, on closer inspection one will see a fearsome hunchback with sallow skin and black teeth. Created with black magic, this creature can also shape-shift, yet is less deadly than its larger counterparts, preying on female victims and waiting for each to recover before feeding from them once more. However, its victims do suffer one unfortunate side effect in that they will become nymphomaniacs.

The patasola of Columbia is another vampire that sheds an unfortunate light on women. Like many of the seductive female vampires of Southeast Asia, this creature appears to men working in the forest. It lures them away from their companions by beckoning them to follow. When they are alone, she will transform into a monstrous one-legged creature with a hoof, like the baobhan sith of Scotland. Set on devouring them, she feasts on their flesh and licks up every drop of blood. Sometimes seen as a nature spirit, she protects the forest from loggers and hunters and is thus blamed for men straying from the path and becoming lost.

The azéman of Suriname, a country near Brazil, is a living vampire that takes the form of a bat

While North American vampire legends can be directly paralleled with their European counterparts, the fiendish creatures of the land's indigenous population are unholy terrors with echoes of ancient gods and sacred magic that lurk deep in the mountains and forests, hunting down their prey like animals in the night. Rest easy, tonight, dear reader, for what we have learned here is this: the world is filled with insatiable revenants, with prowling shape-shifters, and the only truth is that they will come for you, wherever you might be.

They will drink your blood slowly, eating your flesh, draining your life-force drop by drop, until you too lie cold in your own grave. So the only remaining question is whether you too will rise from death, with the feeling of insatiable hunger in your belly, and begin searching, aching, for just one drop of warm blood, to get you through this, the coldest of nights.



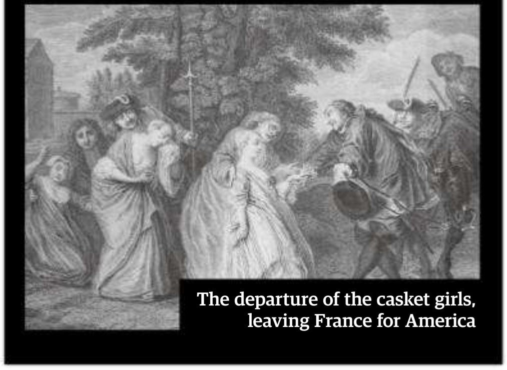
The patasola is a murderous creature that haunts South American woodlands, waiting to drink the blood of anyone who might injure the forest

The French casket girls

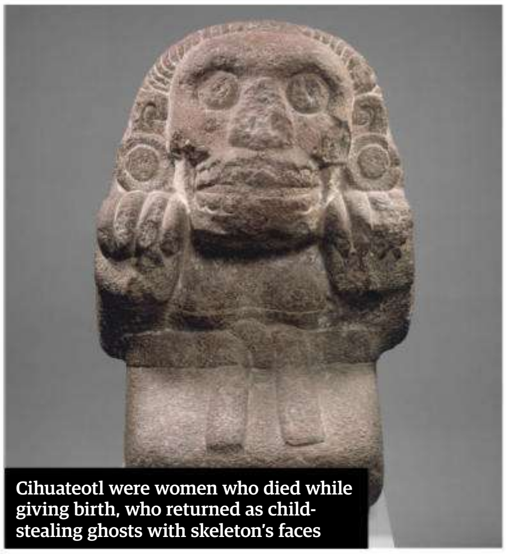
Virginal wives for colonialists or vampire-smuggling murderers? Whichever is true, legends still linger around these virtuous brides

New England was not the only region of North America afflicted by vampires; indeed, New Orleans notoriously has its fair share. From 1704, the casquette or casket girls - so called due to the caskets they carried their clothes in - were selected by the Church and brought by colonists from orphanages and convents in France to Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi. These girls were imported with the intention of marrying them off on the grounds that they were virginal, since men outnumbered women by far in these areas and were in need of virtuous wives.

But there is another version of this tale, steeped in legend: that these girls - who would have arrived pale and sickly after their crossing - were actually vampires. Others believed that they actually carried vampires with them in their coffin-like caskets, ready to unleash these undead creatures on the New World as soon as they disembarked. Today, anyone from New Orleans who can trace their heritage back to one of these women beams with pride - whether they were vampires or not.



The departure of the casket girls, leaving France for America



Cihuateotl were women who died while giving birth, who returned as child-stealing ghosts with skeleton's faces

IRISH VAMPIRES

In Celtic folklore, the Dearg-Due were attractive female vampires who lured men to graveyards before killing them. Other vampires, like the baobhan sith, wore long dresses to hide their hooved feet. They seduced men before drinking their blood.

REAL-LIFE VAMPIRES

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Was the Medieval warlord a bloodthirsty psychopath or the saviour of Europe?

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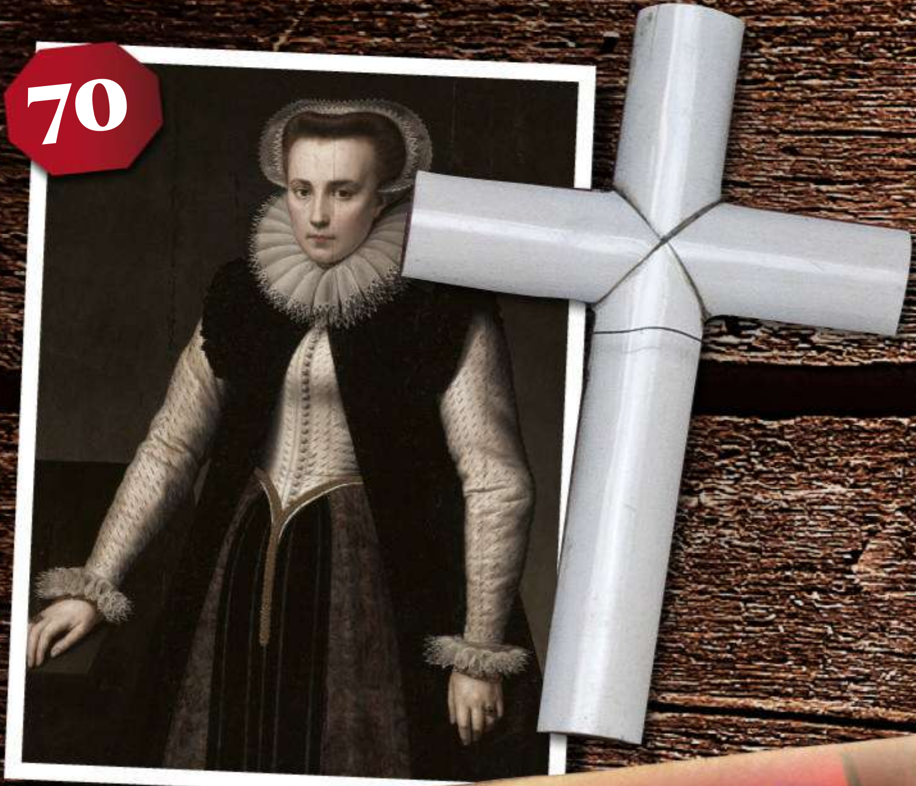

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MAP
of the
Southern part of
NEW ENGLAND
Compiled for
Prest. Dwights Travels,
BY
GEORGE GILLET ESQ.
1823.
Scale of Miles
CONNECTICUT
RHODE ISLAND
ATLANTIC
MERCY L.
daughter of
GEORGE T. & MARY E.
BROWN,
Died Jan. 17, 1892
Aged 19 years

78

88

The Real Dracula

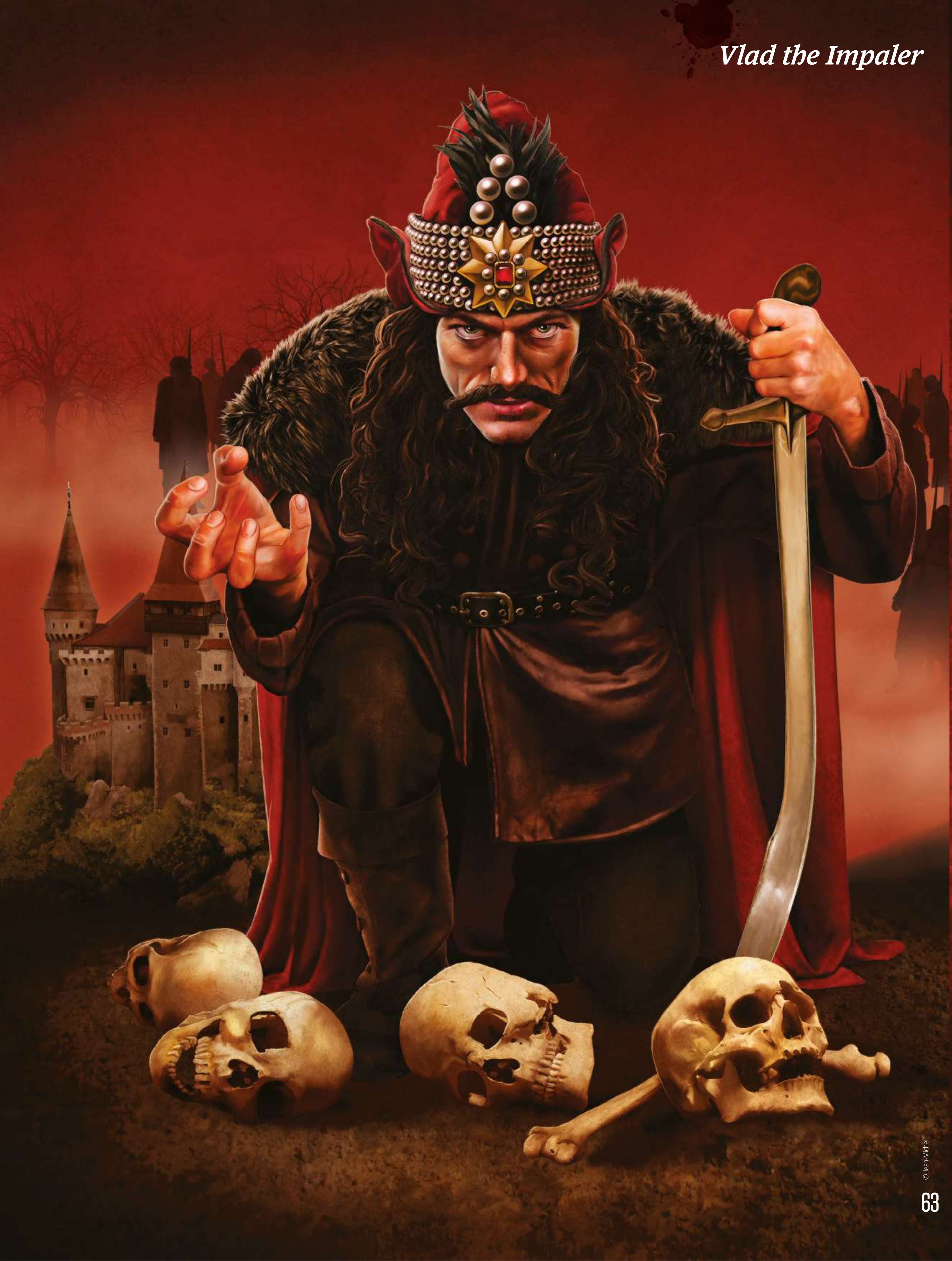
VLAD THE IMPALER

Was the Medieval warlord a bloodthirsty psychopath or the saviour of Europe?

Words by **Catherine Curzon**

Romania's Medieval warlord is known by many names, all of them infamous. To some he is Vlad III, to others, Vlad Drăculea, while history has recorded him rather more notoriously as Vlad the Impaler and even, most famously of all, Dracula. It's a moniker that hints at his bloodlust and preferred method of execution: skewering his victims on stakes and leaving their rotting remains to line the forest. The famed 'forest of the impaled' served as a warning to the Turks, and these terror tactics allegedly frightened away an invading Ottoman army. Vlad was willing to go to extreme lengths to keep the lands that had taken years to bring under his control.

The infamous Impaler was also known to boil, burn and disembowel his enemies – and yet he was remembered by some as a national hero, an orthodox Christian who tried to stop the spread of Islam. It wasn't just the Turkish enemy that felt the wrath of the Balkan warlord, however. Any man, woman or child who committed a crime, from adultery to stealing, would be punished. As a test, Vlad placed a golden cup in the square of Târgoviște and no one dared to steal it throughout his reign. His fascinating story offers a glimpse back to a time of conflict, when one man could be a devil to some and a saviour to others.



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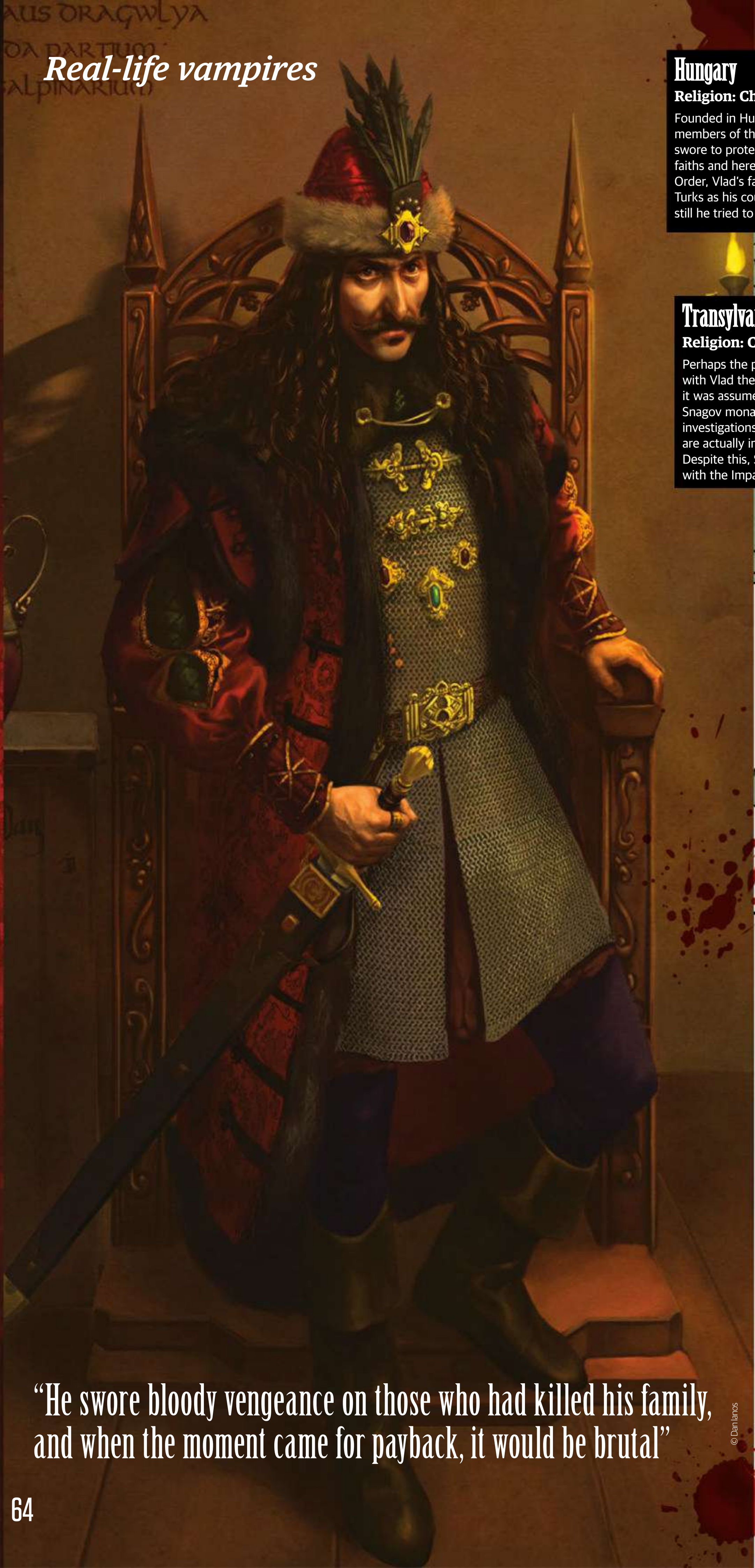


“He swore bloody vengeance on those who had killed his family, and when the moment came for payback, it would be brutal”

© Dan Ianos

HUNGARY
TRANSYLVANIA
BOSNIA
Poenari Castle
WA
MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Hungary

Religion: Christianity

Founded in Hungary in 1408, the members of the Order of the Dragon swore to protect Christianity against other faiths and heretics. As a member of the Order, Vlad’s father counted the Ottoman Turks as his country’s greatest enemy yet still he tried to appease them.

Transylvania

Religion: Christianity

Perhaps the place most associated with Vlad the Impaler, for a long time it was assumed that he was buried at Snagov monastery. In fact, extensive investigations suggest that Vlad’s remains are actually in Comana monastery. Despite this, Snagov remains associated with the Impaler.

Bulgaria

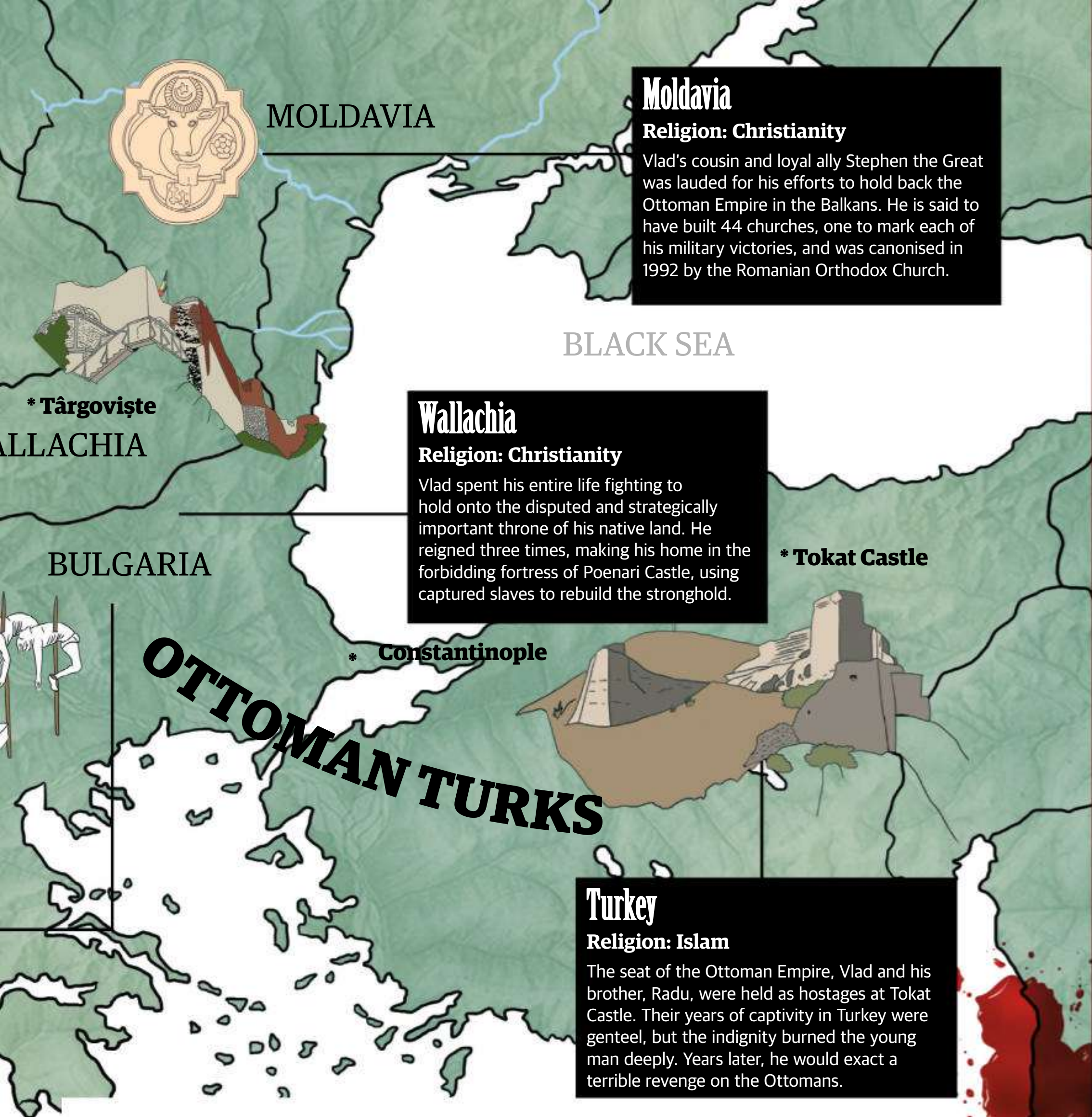
Religion: Christianity/Islam

The people of Bulgaria still hail Vlad as a hero for his defence of their country. He impaled thousands of occupying Turks and offered Christian Bulgarians safe haven in Wallachia. Others were slaughtered, with forests of impaled victims lining the roads, beheadings on a mass scale and whole settlements razed to the ground.

Vlad the Impaler began his life in the deep winter of 1431. He was born to Vlad II Dracul, the soon-to-be voivode (prince) of Wallachia, but of his mother we know nothing certain. Perhaps she was Princess Cneajna of Moldavia, wife of Vlad II, or maybe she was one of the ruler’s many mistresses. Whoever she was, she gave birth to a boy who would become one of the most terrifying rulers known to history.

Vlad was born into a world of conflict and territorial disputes. He was raised to understand the importance of honouring his family name and forever pushing the limits of his lands, whatever the cost, to those who opposed him. As a member of the Order of the Dragon, his father was sworn to defend Christianity from the Ottomans and others who did not share their faith. It was a vow that Vlad himself would also defend as he slashed and burned a bloody swathe through the Balkans.

When Vlad was five years old, his father was crowned voivode of Wallachia. However, he lost the throne six years later and, in his attempts to secure his return to power, tried to keep on the best side of all the important parties. At first things went well, and Vlad and his brother, Radu, were stationed at the Ottoman court to prove the voivode’s loyalty



Moldavia

Religion: Christianity

Vlad's cousin and loyal ally Stephen the Great was lauded for his efforts to hold back the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans. He is said to have built 44 churches, one to mark each of his military victories, and was canonised in 1992 by the Romanian Orthodox Church.

Wallachia

Religion: Christianity

Vlad spent his entire life fighting to hold onto the disputed and strategically important throne of his native land. He reigned three times, making his home in the forbidding fortress of Poenari Castle, using captured slaves to rebuild the stronghold.

Turkey

Religion: Islam

The seat of the Ottoman Empire, Vlad and his brother, Radu, were held as hostages at Tokat Castle. Their years of captivity in Turkey were genteel, but the indignity burned the young man deeply. Years later, he would exact a terrible revenge on the Ottomans.

The Impaler's hunting ground

in exchange for Ottoman support. When the Order of the Dragon demanded that Vlad II Dracul join their crusade against the Turks, however, it seemed that his wily efforts to remain on the good side of everyone had failed.

The brothers became prisoners, but despite being held hostage, their lives were comfortable and privileged. Vlad and Radu were given a fine academic education, as well as training in combat, strategy and military matters. However, the very thought of being held captive left Vlad seething with resentment and that only worsened as he watched his younger brother, Radu, become a favourite of the Ottoman sultan and eventually convert to Islam.

Vlad, on the other hand, never liked to toe the line and was often severely punished for his transgressions. When news reached Vlad that his father and elder brother, Mircea, had been brutally murdered by rebel nobles in 1447, that resentment burst into fury. He swore bloody vengeance on those who had killed his family, and when the moment came for payback, it would be brutal.

Upon his release, Vlad returned to Wallachia as Vlad III and, aged just 17, claimed the throne that his father had lost. He hung onto it for just two months before John Hunyadi – better known as the White Knight of Hungary, and a sworn enemy of Vlad's family – invaded Wallachia. Vlad was forced to flee to Moldavia, seeking protection from his uncle, Prince Bogdan, and his cousin, Stephen – a man who would later become a vital figure in the story of the Impaler.

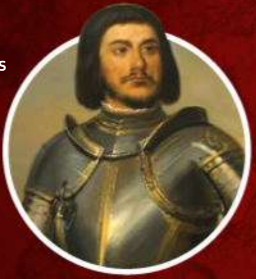
However, things had taken an unexpected turn in Wallachia, where Hunyadi's preferred candidate for the role of voivode, Vladislav II, had turned out to be rather fond of appeasing the Turks. Hunyadi might not have approved of Vlad, but the two men formed an unlikely alliance, plotting to take back the throne of Wallachia. The decision came not a moment too soon.

In 1453, Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks and suddenly the doors of Europe were wide open for invasion. Now the retaking of Wallachia was more important than ever and, in 1456, as Hunyadi's troops invaded Serbia, Vlad led his men into Wallachia. The two men met very different fates: Hunyadi fell victim to plague and died, while Vlad triumphed and slaughtered Vladislav II. It marked the beginning of six violent years of rule as voivode of Wallachia, and the start of a legacy written in blood.

Bloody rulers

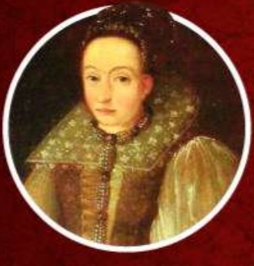
Vlad the Impaler isn't alone in ruling with an iron fist – history is full of merciless monarchs and deadly dictators

Gilles de Rais



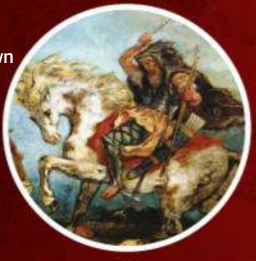
Born in 1405, Baron de Rais was one of the most prolific child killers in history, revelling in abuse and torture. The number of his victims is unknown but is believed to be more than 100. De Rais was executed in 1440; none of his victims were ever found.

Elizabeth Bathory



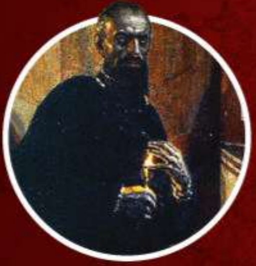
Known by some as Countess Dracula, Bathory was alleged to have murdered hundreds of young women at her home in Hungary, but escaped execution. Locked up in a castle room with just small hatches to pass her food, she died in 1614.

Attila the Hun



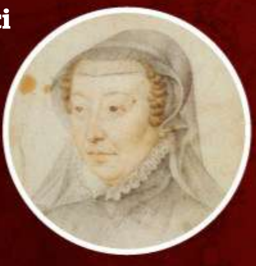
The Scourge of God, Attila laid waste to dozens of cities. Known for his savagery, he spared no one, and fear of him swept through the continent. Attila died at his own wedding feast, choking to death from either an enormous nosebleed or internal bleeding.

Ivan the Terrible

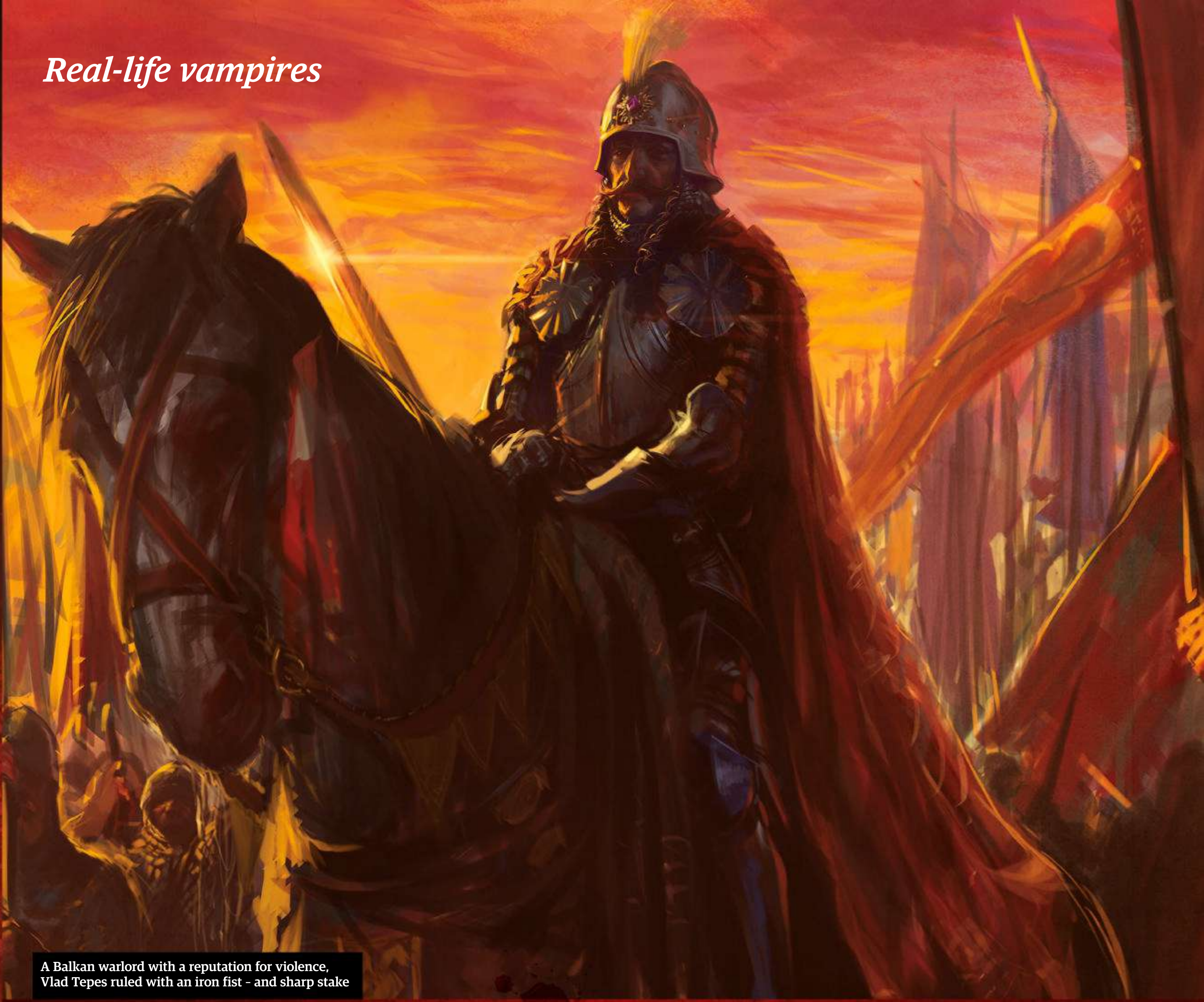


The 16th-century tsar of Russia found personal delight in sadism, and took pleasure in both inflicting and observing torture. He impaled, boiled, burned, beheaded or hanged hundreds of victims, and these were just a few of his more sinister methods.

Catherine de Medici



The devout Catholic is infamous for orchestrating the St Bartholomew's Day massacre. As Protestant crowds gathered in Paris to witness the marriage of her daughter to Henry of Navarre in 1572, an estimated 3,000 were slaughtered.



A Balkan warlord with a reputation for violence, Vlad Tepes ruled with an iron fist - and sharp stake

Vlad versus the Transylvanian Saxons

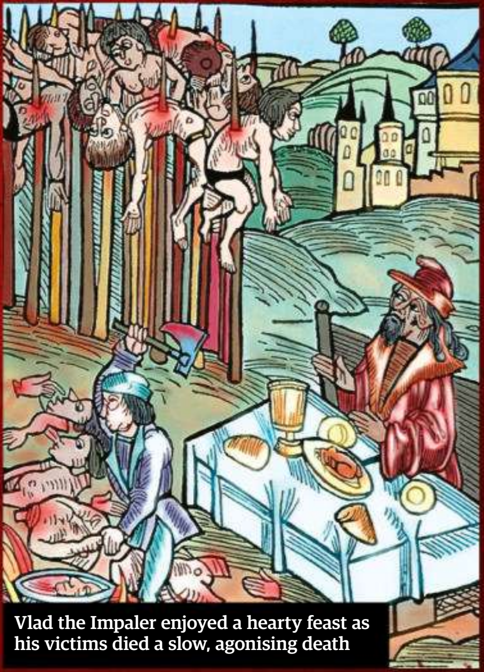
The conflict that gave birth to the dark prince's name

The influential Transylvanian Saxons were long-time critics of Vlad the Impaler; unsurprisingly, he exacted a terrible fate on them as punishment for their opposition. Although the Saxons were a minority in Transylvania, they were extremely powerful, controlling the region's fortified towns and its industry. For centuries they had been afforded special status under the Hungarian crown, but when Vlad came to power, all of that was set to change.

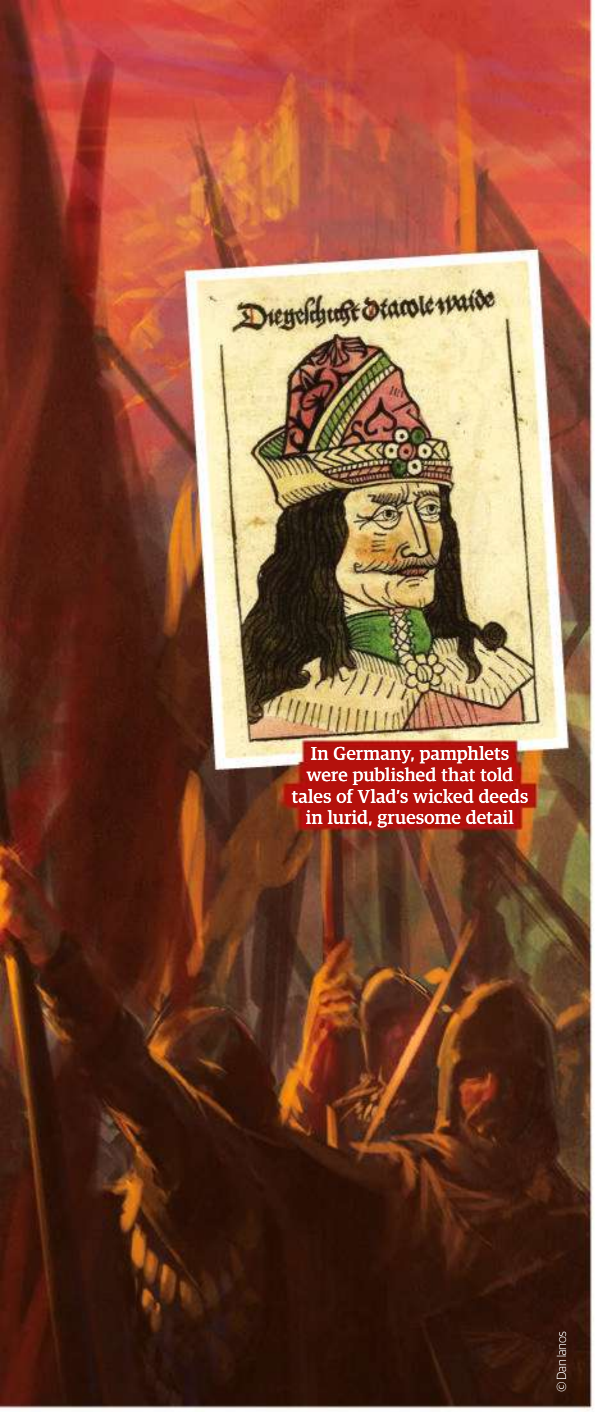
The Transylvanian Saxons disputed Vlad's claim to the throne of neighbouring Wallachia and chose to support his enemy, Dan III of Transylvania. Not only that, but they also enjoyed trade privileges that the Wallachian merchants did not, so when Vlad levied heavy taxes on the Saxons, they refused to pay. This continued until 1459 when Vlad's forces swept into the city of Kronstadt (known today as Braşov) and dragged the merchants up to Mount Tampa.

Here, on the hills overlooking the city, those who had dared defy their ruler met a gruesome fate. A stake was pushed into the anus of each victim, so that their own weight would slowly force them to slide down its length. It was an agonisingly slow death, and the hellish moans of the dying echoed over the city. The pretender Dan III was captured and forced to dig his own grave. Only when the pit was deep enough for a body was he allowed to rest, and then ordered to recite his own eulogy. As the final words left Dan's lips, Vlad beheaded him.

Legend has it that Vlad the Impaler dined royally amid the forest of dying Saxons, enjoying a banquet as the screams of the victims filled the air. German reports of the atrocities claimed that he dipped his bread into the blood of the Transylvanian Saxons. This is one of the first references to link Vlad Tepes with the vampiric legends that later attached themselves to his name.



Vlad the Impaler enjoyed a hearty feast as his victims died a slow, agonising death



In Germany, pamphlets were published that told tales of Vlad's wicked deeds in lurid, gruesome detail

© Dan Ianos

Safely installed on the throne of Wallachia, Vlad immediately began to consolidate his position. He sent thousands of troops to fight on behalf of his cousin, Stephen, and ensure that he was successful in conquering Moldavia. The two cousins now controlled strategically important points in the Balkans, and together would prove an enormous obstacle to the Ottomans. Vlad couldn't help but think back to his youth. No matter how good the education he had enjoyed in captivity, he had still been a hostage, and now the time had come for revenge.

Intelligence reached Vlad that included the names of many Wallachian nobles, or boyars, who had conspired to murder his father and bury his brother, Mircea, alive. Cunning as ever, he invited the men named to attend an Easter feast and bring their families along to enjoy the festivities. When they arrived, the boyars were arrested. The oldest were impaled on the spot; the young and fit, however, were forced into slave labour rebuilding Vlad's castle. Conditions were brutal, and those that survived the gruelling work were slaughtered once the project was completed.

Stories are still told of Vlad's extreme cruelty, particularly towards the women of Wallachia. Those who lost their virginity outside of wedlock were tortured, while children were roasted alive and then fed to their mothers. Dishonest shopkeepers were skewered and one of his enemies was even sawn in half. Some claim that Vlad impaled mice and birds for recreation, but much of this is open to conjecture. Such tales serve both good and bad purposes. On the one hand, they do much to instil fear in the enemy or would-be invader. On the other, they tend to obscure the facts.

Not all the stories were rumours. When Sultan Mehmed II claimed Wallachia as part of the Ottoman Empire, Vlad had no intention of acquiescing to him. He did welcome the Turkish envoys to his court, suggesting he might be open to negotiation. Instead, the envoys were seized and their turbans nailed to their heads, killing them. After all, Vlad pointed out, it was impolite to refuse to raise one's headgear when meeting the prince.

The sultan was furious and dispatched a trusted envoy, Hamza Bey, to seek an audience with Vlad. Bey's instructions were clear: claim Wallachia for the Ottoman Empire by any means, even if that included killing the intransigent ruler. Vlad was waiting to receive Bey and his men and, as they travelled through rural Wallachia, they were ambushed. The soldiers were impaled on wooden spikes; in deference to his importance, Hamza Bey was impaled on the tallest of them all.

> "Stories are still told of Vlad's extreme cruelty, particularly towards the women of Wallachia. Those who lost their virginity outside of wedlock were tortured"

Wherever Vlad the Impaler trod, bloodshed followed by the gallon. His hatred for the Ottoman Turks knew no bounds and it wasn't enough for him to know that his enemies were falling, he wanted to be there to kill them in person. Putting to good use the Turkish he had learned during captivity, Vlad infiltrated Ottoman strongholds across Bulgaria. His forces slaughtered thousands of men, women and children, killing civilians as readily as they did soldiers. The lands echoed with the cries of the wounded and dying, the air became thick with the smoke of burning villages and the people trembled at the advance of the Impaler. With his empire in the Balkans sinking slowly

From Prince of Wallachia to Prince of Darkness

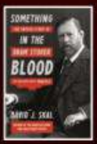
Cultural historian David J Skal looks at the links between Dracula and his historical namesake

Of all the misconceptions about Bram Stoker and Dracula, perhaps the most widespread is the belief that Stoker was inspired to write his classic horror story by the true-life exploits of Vlad Tepes. The sobriquet descended from Vlad's particularly bloodthirsty method of dispatching enemies. But in his own time, Vlad was known and feared as Dracula, meaning son of the devil, or dragon (the words are equivalent in Romanian).

Surely, the business of wooden stakes and impalement had something to do with the famous vampire-removal technique described in Stoker's novel? Actually, it didn't. There is, in fact, zero evidence that Stoker even knew about Vlad's connection to wooden stakes, or had access to any translation of a German account of Vlad dipping bread in the blood of his victims.

Stoker is proven to have actually consulted only one book, found in a library in the seaside resort of Whitby, North Yorkshire, in England, during his 1890 summer vacation. That volume gave him the name Dracula, but included no discussion of blood feasting or impalement, and no description of the atrocious occasion on which 20,000 victims were displayed in a mile-long semicircle outside Dracula's capital city, Târgoviște, as a highly effective warning to oncoming Turkish troops.

Stoker himself actually never even visited Wallachian or Transylvanian regions of Romania - he instead consulted maps and travel guides at home - and did little, if any, additional research into the infamous Impaler. In fact, he already had the story plotted out when his fortuitous discovery of the name Dracula allowed him to give his tale some historical verisimilitude, and a far superior appellation than the over-obvious villain "Count Wampyr" he had originally conceived.



David J Skal is author of the book *Something In The Blood: The Untold Story Of Bram Stoker, The Man Who Wrote Dracula*

5 FRIGHTENING EXECUTION METHODS

Despite his name, Vlad the Impaler subjected his enemies to a variety of cruel and merciless deaths

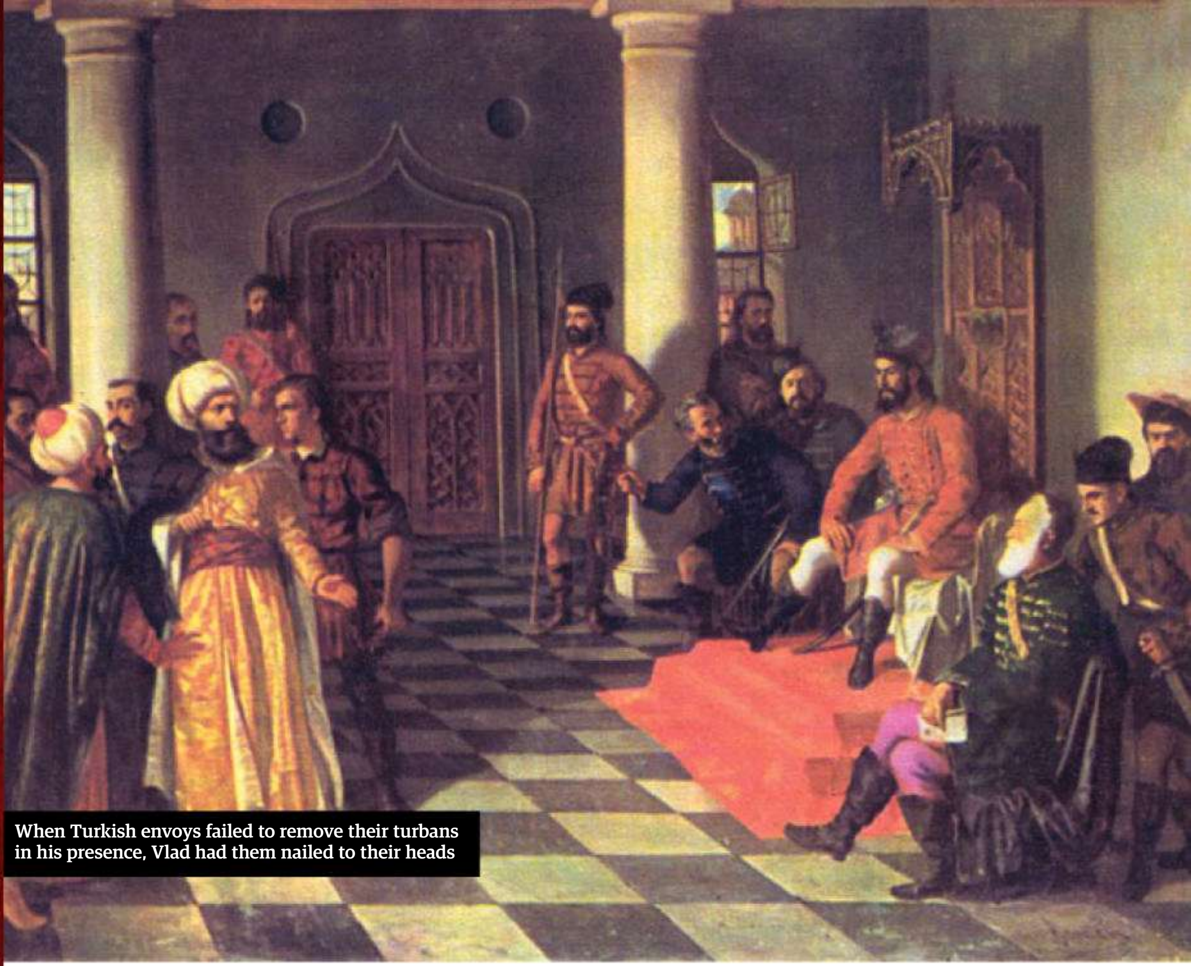
20,000+ IMPALED

5,000+ BEHEADED

10,000+ BURNED ALIVE

10+ NAILED TURBANS TO THEIR HEADS

1 BOILED ALIVE AND CANNIBALISED



When Turkish envoys failed to remove their turbans in his presence, Vlad had them nailed to their heads

beneath the blood of Vlad's victims, Sultan Mehmed II struck back. Long since converted to Islam, Radu the Handsome, the brother imprisoned alongside Vlad, joined the 90,000 Ottoman soldiers who crossed the Danube in 1462 and marched on Wallachia. Vlad, however, did not meet his attackers head on, but travelled by night, ambushing groups and picking them off a few thousand at a time, chipping away at men and morale. He knew his territory intimately and exploited this knowledge, catching the invaders in passes and gorges, his deadly strikes coming without warning.

The king of Hungary, Matthius Corvinus, however, did not rally to support Vlad, though he had in the past. The son of Hunyadi still viewed the Impaler with a suspicious eye, and when the seemingly endless Turkish push continued, Vlad turned to Corvinus for help. Instead, Corvinus, nursing ambitions of his own, had Vlad thrown in jail. For four years he languished in captivity, yet the cunning Impaler was not about to be beaten.

Upon his release in 1474, Vlad engaged the assistance of Stephen V Bathory of Transylvania and the two men successfully reclaimed his throne. However, as he embarked on his third reign, the Ottomans were determined to put an end to his rule. The Turks bided their time until Vlad began to think himself safe then, as he travelled through the countryside in the closing days of 1476, they struck.

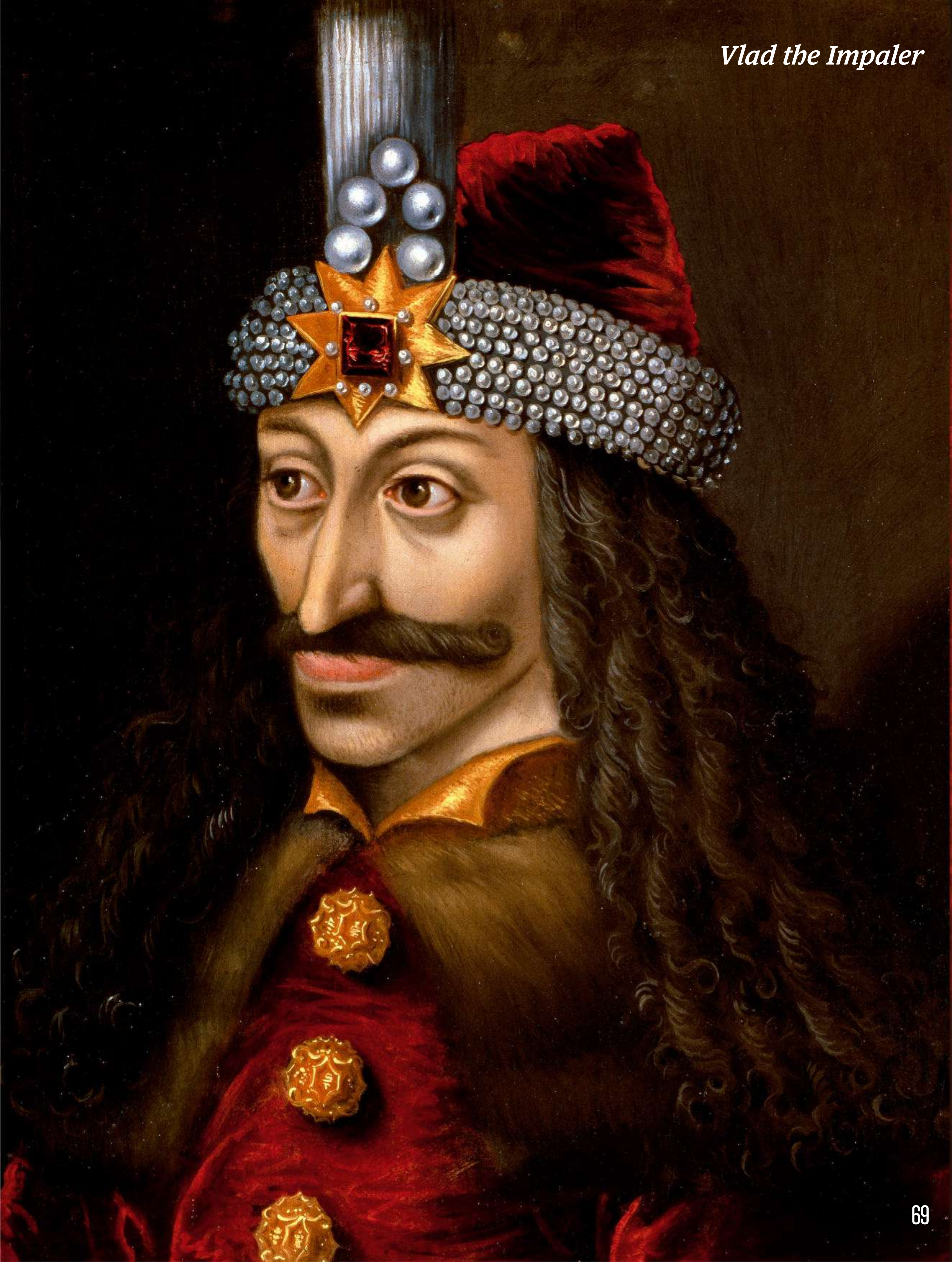
With forces spent after the recent struggle to reclaim Wallachia, Vlad had little time to regroup and faced the massed Ottoman forces with just a few thousand men. Just as the circumstances of his birth are lost, so do stories disagree on how this warlord perished. Some claim that he died a hero, fighting fiercely alongside his loyal retainers. Others say he was murdered by traitorous boyars. Yet another report has Vlad's head severed by the Turks and paraded on a stake. No one knows for sure the location of his final resting place, but it's most likely to be in the Comana Monastery in Giurgiu County, an order that the Impaler founded.

Centuries after his death, those forests of corpses still hold a gruesome fascination, and even today, he enjoys a conflicted reputation. Perhaps our modern perception found its genesis not in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* but in the German writings that related his deeds in blood-soaked detail, slavishly listing every act of cruelty, real or imagined. These illustrated pamphlets sold in their hundreds and were carried throughout Europe, spreading the tale of the merciless voivode. Soon these pamphlets had grown into a whole series and the public lapped them up, horrified and captivated.

It is perhaps unsurprising that, the closer to Vlad's homeland one gets, the more lauded he is. In Romania, he is a hero. Perceived as a god-fearing defender of the people, the Impaler is an important national figure, the man who stood alone between Christianity and the march of the Ottoman forces.

Nearly 600 years after his death, the tale of Vlad III has not faded. Immortalised in film, literature and fairy tales, the shadow of Vlad the Impaler and those who died at his hand continues to loom large.

> "Some claim that he died a hero, fighting fiercely alongside his loyal retainers. Others say he was murdered by traitorous boyars"



Vlad the Impaler

Elizabeth Báthory

The story of how one of history's most reviled figures terrorised the Kingdom of Hungary

Words by **Peter Price**

As the cold midwinter of 1610 seeped through the stone of Čachtice Castle in Hungary, screams could be heard coming from within. The 50-year-old widow, Countess Elizabeth Báthory, was indulging in some entertainment. At her feet lay a young serving girl who was being burned with red-hot irons. She would not survive.

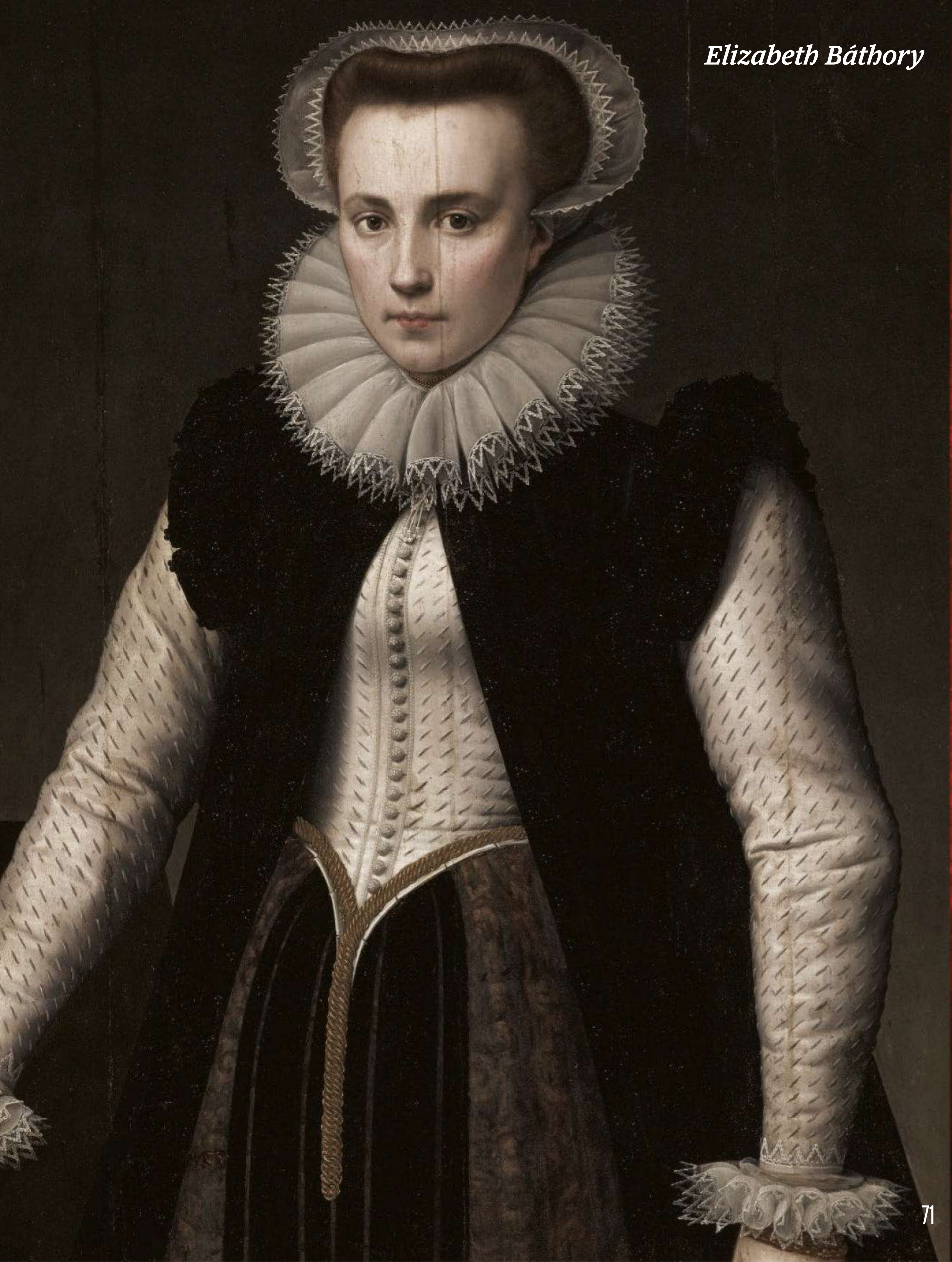
The countess, who would come to be known as the most prolific female killer in history, seems to have found pleasure in inflicting pain and misery on her servants, serfs and anyone who crossed her. Over the years, these tales of torture grew so monstrous that she was thought to have bathed in the blood of virgins, a pastime that granted her eternal youth. Like the fictional character Dracula, with whom she is often compared, she is seen as a monster and someone who inflicts pain on others for personal pleasure. Over centuries of folklore and embellishment, fact and fiction has become muddled, with the number of her victims cited as high as 650.

The Kingdom of Hungary, where Báthory hailed from, looked much different in the late-16th and early-17th centuries than it does now. The southern half was claimed by the Ottoman Empire and offered them a potential gateway into Europe. Opposing this in the north were the various wealthy nobles who, in spite of perceived religious intolerance, were as distrustful of each other as they were of the Turks.

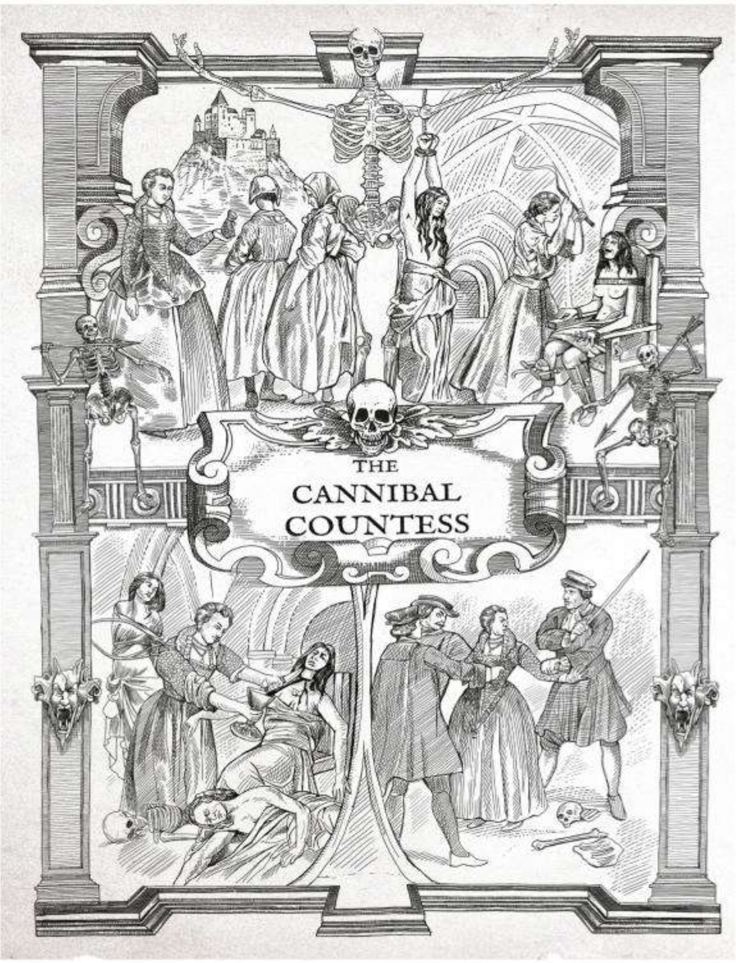
Elizabeth, as she is known by her anglicised name, was born to Baron Thurzó Báthory and Baroness Anna Báthory. Although they hailed from two separate branches of the family – Thurzó from the Ecsed and Anna from the Somlyó – their lineage can be traced back to nobles who aided Vlad the Impaler in his attempts to seize the Wallachian throne. An ominous connection. As her father was a Voivode of Transylvania, it gave him exclusive administrative, judicial and military powers within that subset of the Kingdom of Hungary.

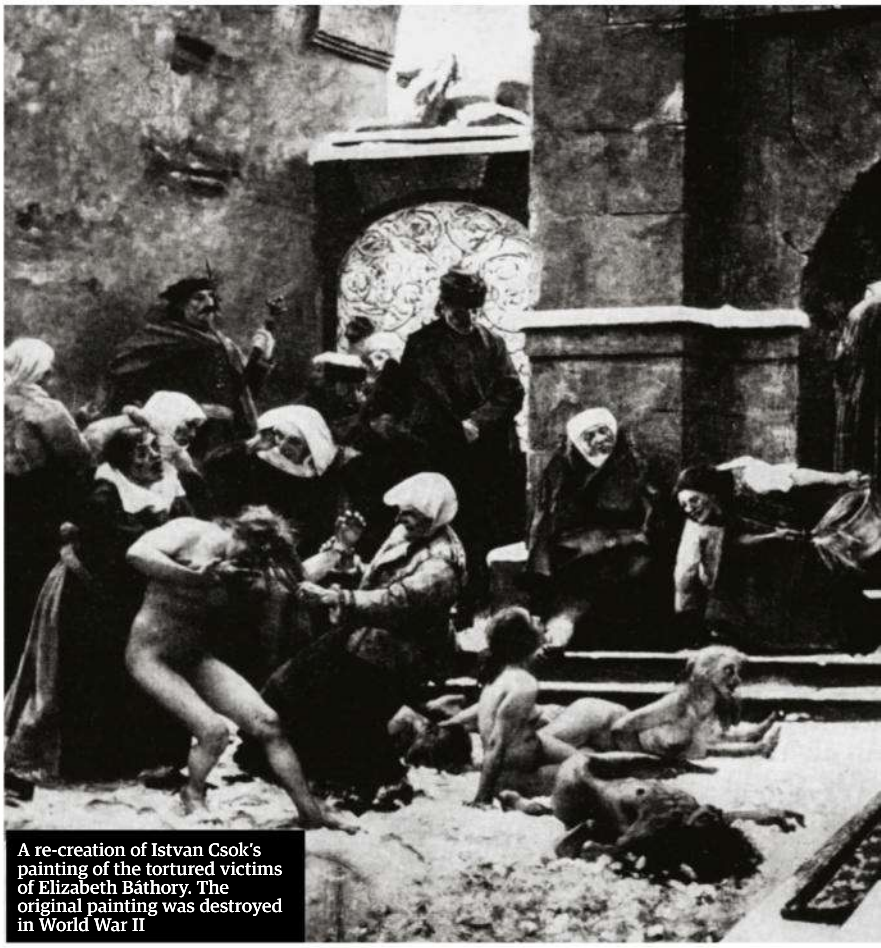
This means that as soon as Báthory was born, she already had an advantage over a significant portion of the Hungarian population. As part of the landed elite, she was schooled in Latin, German and Greek, and her family's wealth meant that she would not want for anything in her early life.

Her wedding to Ferenc Nádasdy, whose family – like the Báthorys – was one of the more wealthy families in Hungary, was attended by over 4,500 guests. They were betrothed when she was around 11 years old, but she was rumoured to have carried a peasant's love child a few years later. A report tells of the child being ripped apart by dogs. As with many aspects of Báthory's life, the truth is hard to pin down. As the social standing of her family was above her husband's coming into the



Elizabeth Báthory




A re-creation of Istvan Csok's painting of the tortured victims of Elizabeth Báthory. The original painting was destroyed in World War II

"It is in her husband's absence that Báthory is thought to have started to indulge in her sadistic tendencies"

marriage, she had refused to change her last name, remaining a Báthory. Her independence is clearly spelt out in a letter she wrote to Lord Bánffy, a fellow Hungarian noble:

"I know well, Lord Bánffy, that this is only the new poverty, that you would be watching my small estate and do this… but yet know you this, that I will not allow myself to be dominated by men for long."

Báthory's early life gives no indication to the horrible accusations that would find her in later life. The couple had five or six children, depending on which records can be trusted, although some did not make it past infancy. Her husband fought in the Ottoman-Hungarian wars and it is in his absence that Báthory is thought to have started to indulge in her sadistic tendencies. Tales of flagellation, branding irons and sewing one unfortunate girl's mouth shut because she talked too much would all be rumours that abounded while Nádasdy was absent.

This life was not to last however, as Nádasdy fell ill to a mysterious malady and died in 1604. This sudden death meant that Elizabeth found herself the owner of a string of estates that stretched over all of greater Hungary in places like Vienna, Beckov and Nyírbátor. Properties like Čachtice Castle, situated in the Carpathian mountains, and the surrounding villages is where she would choose to make her home, both during and after her husband's lifetime.

These lands gave her already-great wealth such a boost that she became the richest, most powerful and desirable countess in the land.

While some reports link her with the deaths of 650 young women, Elizabeth was only officially charged with 80 murders

With the death of her husband, Báthory surrounded herself with courtiers and servants, who would later be accused of the same crimes as their mistress. They were made up of older women and a crippled boy. These women, Anna, Ilona Jó, Dorottya, Katalin, and the boy Ficzkó, were an assortment of wet nurses, washerwomen and friends. Not a stereotypical band of torturers.

It is from their testimonies that we learn of some of Báthory's wilder behaviours, like biting chunks of flesh out of women, sometimes without even leaving the comfort of her bed. There was also talk that Elizabeth beat her servants with cudgels, whips, needles and red-hot irons. The abuse was not always so active, however, as some girls were doused with cold water and left outside to freeze to death. These unfortunate victims seem to have been predominantly castle servants, but also consisted of young, gentrified girls who were sent to the Báthory estate to learn courtly etiquette.

Without the steady stream of plunder from her husband's military campaigns, the Báthory estate was beginning to run low on funds. The king owed an enormous debt to her late husband, and Elizabeth made frequent trips to the royal treasury, attempting to have this coin repaid.

These acts were said to have gone on until 1610 when the bloody accusations could no longer be ignored. It was decided that the palatine of Hungary, Count György Thurzó, would investigate these disturbances. A palatine was a high-level official in the kingdom, a remnant of the bygone Roman era, and was second only to the king in power.

The bloody countess

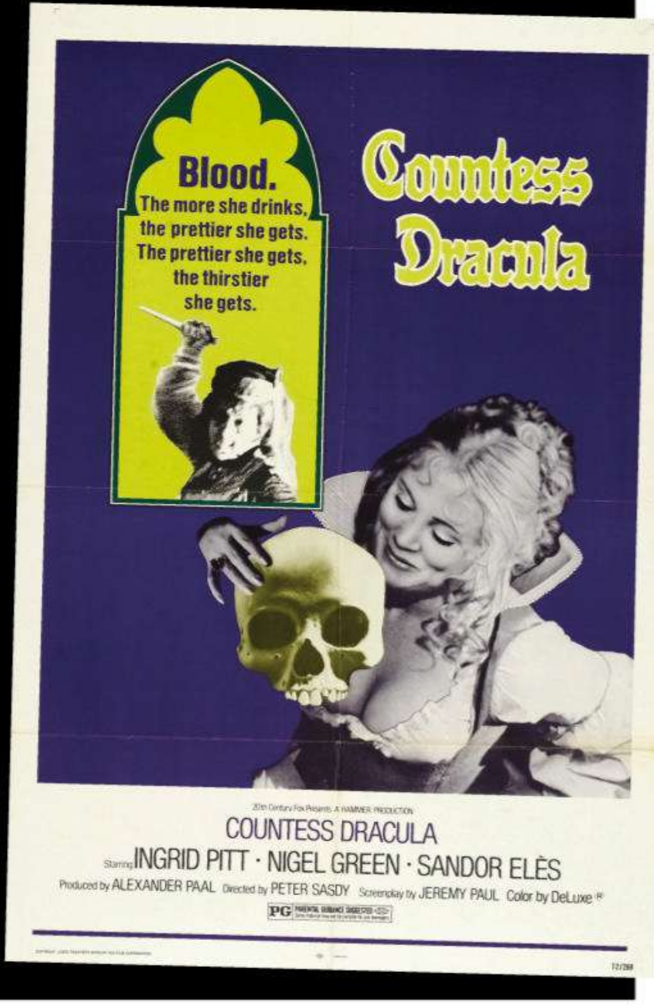
Elizabeth Báthory's fame does not come just from her family name, riches or power, but rather from the dark and twisted tales that have attached themselves to her over the years. Bathing in the blood of virgins is a tall tale, but is it really true? As it stands, there is no contemporary evidence that Báthory bathed in blood or that its power gave her eternal youth.

During her lifetime, she was usually referred to as The Infamous Lady, and it would not be until around 200 years later, when the origin of the vampire was starting to take shape in Eastern Europe, that the story would be attributed to her. Youth and vitality were connected to blood, and it wasn't a big leap to think that new blood would keep someone fit and healthy.

Elizabeth's story is told in various different ways, the most common being that an enraged Báthory slapped a servant and as a result got some of the victim's blood on her hand. On wiping it away, she observed that the skin looked noticeably younger and healthier. After this discovery she would regularly bathe in tubs full of the stuff, or take a 'shower' with bodies cut and hung from the ceiling, covering her in blood.

The first time the legend appeared in print was in 1729 in *Tragica Historia* by a Jesuit scholar. This account is thought to have been gained from local oral history that has either been warped in translation or was hearsay from the start.

Biographers of Báthory have drawn parallels between the countess and the title character of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), insinuating that the former – as much as Vlad the Impaler – was the inspiration for the latter. Whether or not she spawned Stoker's icon is up for debate, but it is certain that Báthory has had a large impact on the modern-day bloodsucker, contributing to the iconography of vampire fiction through the likes of Hammer's *Countess Dracula* and provocative Belgian horror *Daughters of Darkness*, both released in 1971. Less directly her antics are believed to have inspired the 'lesbian vampire' trope, established through Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's novella *Carmilla* (1872), while one of her haunts – Čachtice Castle in Slovakia – served as Count Orlok's home in silent film masterpiece *Nosferatu* (1922).


Blood.
The more she drinks, the prettier she gets. The prettier she gets, the thirstier she gets.
Countess Dracula
20th Century Fox Presents A HAMMER PRODUCTION
COUNTESS DRACULA
Starring INGRID PITT · NIGEL GREEN · SANDOR ELÈS
Produced by ALEXANDER PAAL Directed by PETER SASDY Screenplay by JEREMY PAUL Color by DeLuxe
PG

Thurzó, with his military background and political experience, was seen as the best man for the job.

Arriving at Báthory's estate, he claims in his personal account to have found the dead body of a young woman, and another whose mortal wounds were plainly caused by torture. More women were also found imprisoned and seemed to be waiting to meet the same fate. He wrote in his letter:

"When my men entered Csejthe Manor, they found a girl dead in the house; another followed in death as a result of many wounds and agonies. In addition to this, there was also a wounded and tortured woman there; the other victims were kept hidden away…"

Thurzó did not catch Báthory in the act of torturing these women; it was a later embellishment to the story. What Thurzó does provide is an eyewitness account of Báthory seemingly engaged in the torture and murder of servant girls at her place of residence. It's not quite bathing in virgin's blood, but damning nonetheless.

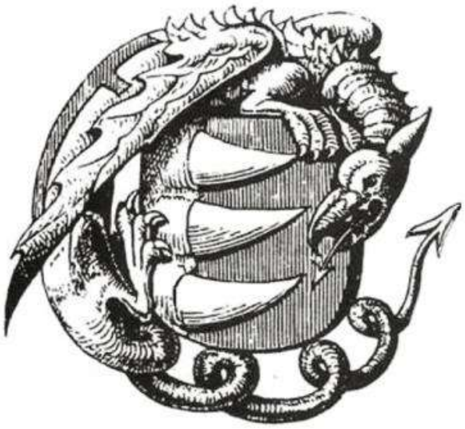
Báthory and her accomplices were then arrested, as officials began their investigation. Under torture, her accomplices admitted that they were complicit in a number of atrocities committed over the years, and other witnesses spoke of seeing seemingly hundreds of young women tortured and killed. Her servant, Ilona Jó, gave this account: "She pricked the girls through their fingers with pins and said, 'If it hurts the whore, then she can pull it out,' if she did so, the Lady would beat her again and cut off the finger."

Elizabeth died at the age of 54 after spending four years in solitary confinement in Čachtice Castle

With the necessary information extracted, her accomplices were executed a week later. Another witness testimony brought Báthory's crimes to the attention of the court:

"The second witness was the honourable Tamás Jaworka, Judge of the City of Kosztolány, about 40 years old, sworn and interrogated; he spoke of the cruelty of the woman Elizabeth Báthory… and said, in addition, that he had heard from some young servants of the said Lady… how extremely cruel this woman was with her maids; namely, that she burned some of them on the abdomen with a red-hot iron; others she seated in a large, earthen tank and poured boiling water over them and scalded the skin, in this way causing them to suffer; the same witness had also frequently seen the appearances of the virgins in her retinue disfigured and covered with blue spots from numerous blows…"

Báthory was never able to defend herself or her actions, being turned down to represent herself in the trial. Thurzó used his connections with the king to impose perpetuis carceribus (life imprisonment) rather than the death penalty. And so Báthory was condemned to live the rest of her life imprisoned in



Báthory's coat of arms, honouring the Order of the Dragon and the family's origin story

The Báthory family

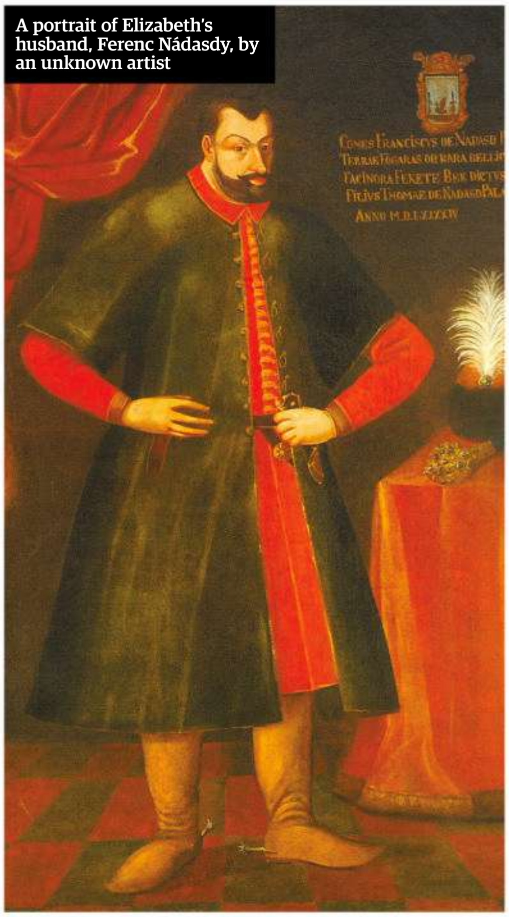
Elizabeth's ancestors rose to wield significant political power in Hungary

The origins of the Báthorys have been traced back to 11th-century Hungarian nobles who emigrated from Swabia (now modern-day Germany). The family would split a few centuries later into two distinct branches, the Ecsed and Somlyo, with Elizabeth's parents coming from both branches.

The Báthory's connection with the Order of the Dragon, Elizabeth's coat of arms and dragons in general can be traced back to the legendary origins of the family. In the year 900, a pious warrior named Vitus slew a dragon in the swamps of Ecsed and was gifted the name Báthory in recognition. The three dragon talons on the coat of arms are thought to represent the three lance thrusts it took to slay the drake.

The Báthorys would grow to hold many religious, military and civil roles in government. A prime example would be Cardinal Andrew Barthory, who would become the Grand Master of the Order of the Dragon. Perhaps the most famous member of the family, Elizabeth not withstanding of course, is Stephen Báthory, who became king of Poland in 1576. He has been described as the 'darling of both the Polish public opinion and Polish historians' and was uncle to Elizabeth through her mother, but probably didn't factor much in her life. His reign is hailed as one of the strongest in Polish history where he beat the Habsburg candidate to the throne, defended the borders from Russian incursions and attempted to build a great state from Poland, Muscovy and Transylvania (which he was count of).

These prominent connections across Eastern Europe have been theorised as another reason why Elizabeth was not brought to trial. The embarrassment that allegations like Elizabeth's could bring to the family name would have been acute, and so the Báthorys used their power and influence to have her imprisoned instead.



A portrait of Elizabeth's husband, Ferenc Nádasdy, by an unknown artist

What remains of Báthory's family home, Čachtice Castle

her own castle, bricked up in a room with a sliver of space to have food passed through and to allow airflow. Her lands and wealth were stripped from her and divided up among her relatives.

In this way she would die alone four years later. Her last recorded words were her telling her guard: "Look, how cold my hands are." The reply being: "It's nothing, mistress. Just go and lie down."
She was found dead in the morning and buried nearby to the outrage of the villagers who rioted. Her body was then moved to the Báthory family crypt but has since disappeared and to this day it is not known where her remains lie.

By all accounts, the life of Elizabeth Báthory was one of a sadist; someone who enjoyed inflicting pain and suffering on her fellow Hungarians. There is some evidence, however, that could show her in a different light; one that paints her as a victim of political manoeuvring and slander on a massive scale.

By a happy coincidence (for them), or by more sinister connections, many of the countess's relatives who received new lands had close ties with Count Thurzó, as did many of the witnesses at Bathory's trial. This meant that these people had something to gain from the condemnation and imprisonment of Elizabeth. Naturally, suspicion should be shown to these figures and their accounts in order to view Báthory's actions fairly.

Elizabeth's killing spree is thought to have taken place over a period of almost 20 years – between 1590 and 1609

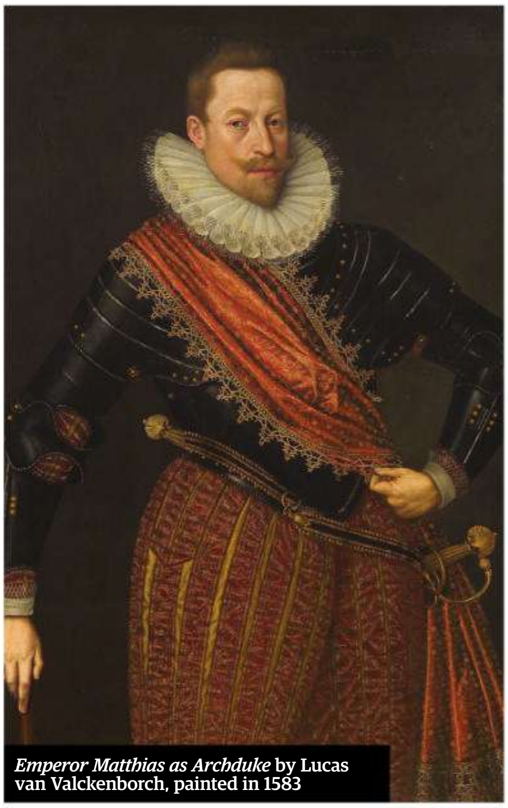
The confessions from her accomplices were gained under torture, a method that is suspect and often thought of as inadmissible in a modern-day court. This, coupled with Elizabeth's lack of trial and personal defence, has left large gaps in our knowledge of the situation, and in these gaps, myths have sprouted and taken hold. With the main evidence levelled against Báthory coming from these confessions and independent witness testimonies, there are some who believe that Báthory was the victim of a conspiracy. This is certainly a possibility, as the removal of a powerful local rival would suit the aims of Thurzó, who would also gain credit for stopping a 'monster'. The extended Báthory family also stood to gain many benefits from the lands that they stood to inherit. Elizabeth's lucrative land holdings would have been seized by the crown, not passed to her relatives, if she had been tried and convicted. It is also very

convenient that with the condemnation of Báthory, the Hungarian king would be free of his large debts to her estates.

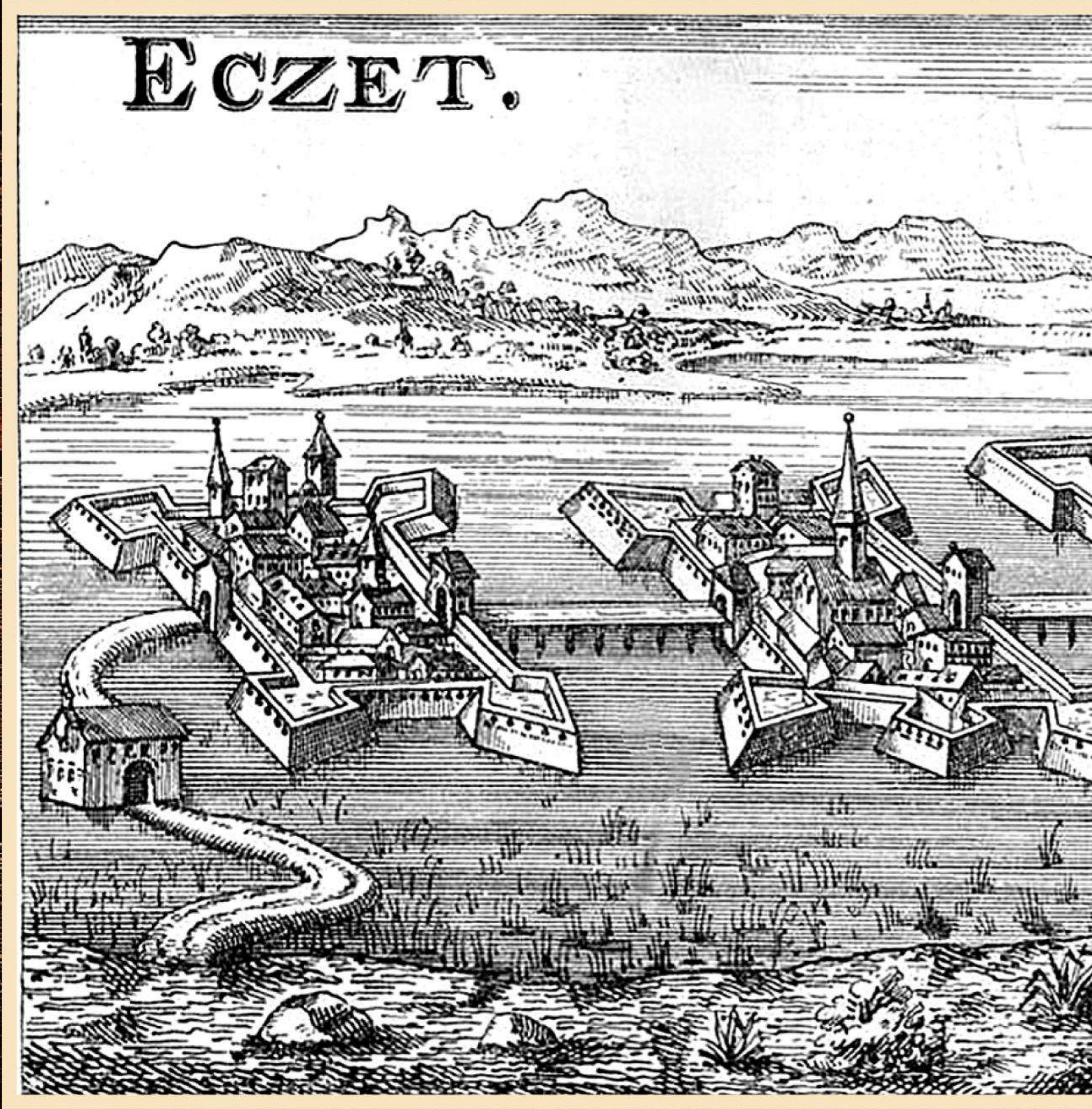
Premature deaths and the beating of servants was a grisly part of daily life in this period, and these actions could have been used to pin non-existent crimes on Báthory. Some ideas go even further, stating that many of the 'torture' devices used were actually healing instruments, that when she was accused of burning servants with red hot irons she was not doing it for pleasure, but as a way of staunching a bleeding wound; trying to save lives rather than take them. The wounds left behind by such drastic actions could well be perceived as torture wounds if the context was unknown; taking Thurzó's surprise visit as an example. These arguments are plausible, although Thurzó did not initiate the investigation on his own, but was ordered to by the authority of King Matthias II. The king had received years of complaints by Magyari, a local Lutheran minister, who was concerned about the activity coming from within Báthory's estate. It is also known that Thurzó did not go to the Báthory estate with the sole intention of arresting Elizabeth, and seems to have been genuinely attempting to find out the truth behind the accusations. He may have believed that the murmurings of terrible goings on were spread by Elizabeth's cousins in an attempt to destabilise the region and make a power play for the crown. Whatever the truth, in the eyes of the contemporary nobles, the perpetrators of these terrible crimes had met their ultimate fate and the case was closed. With more than 300 witness testimonies and eyewitness accounts from some of her closest advisors, it is difficult to believe that there is not a kernel of truth in the stories.

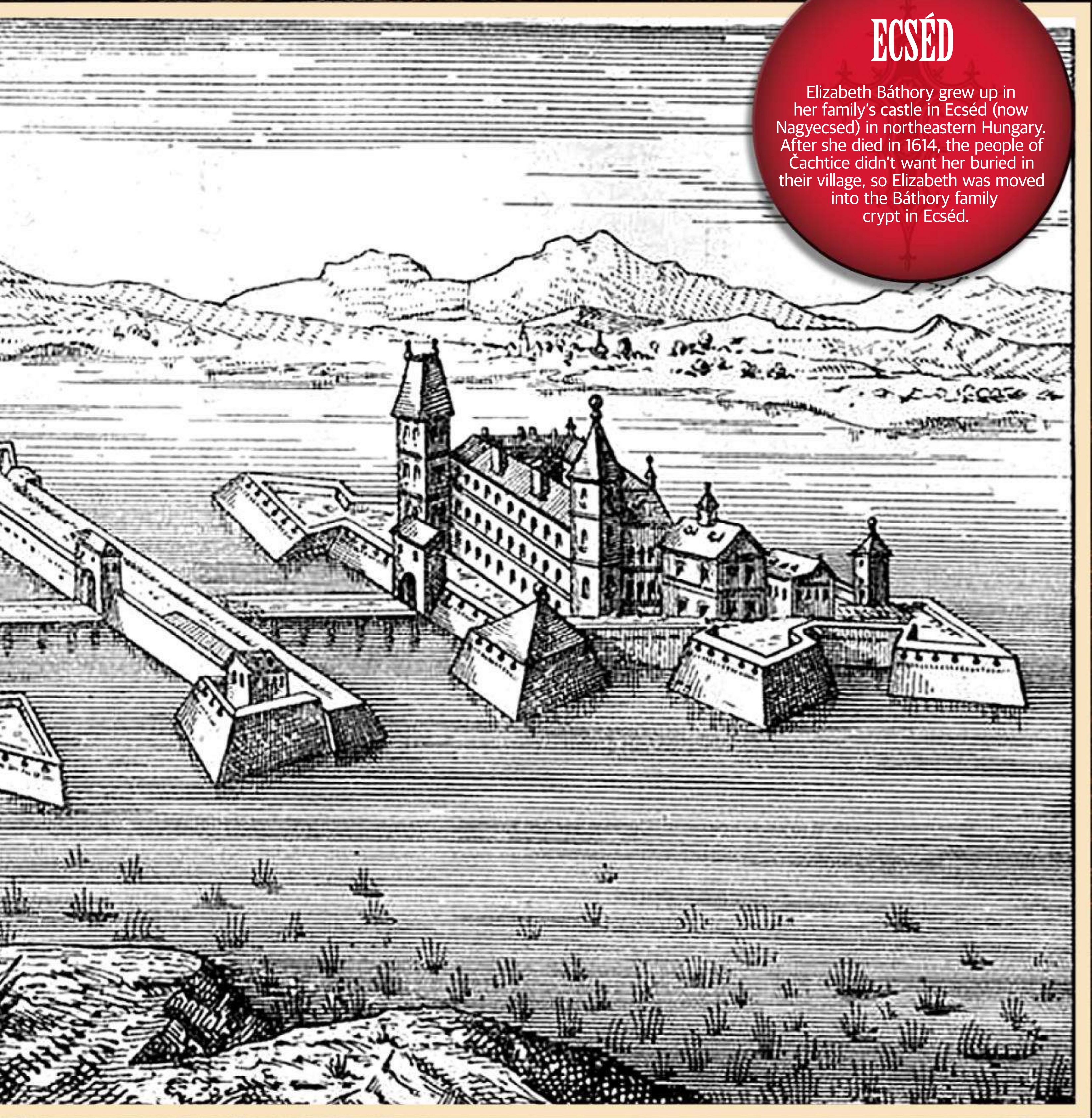
Čachtice Castle is now part of modern-day Slovakia and is located close to the border with the Czech Republic

The question becomes: how much is to be believed and were other factors at play than simple justice? The figure of 650 victims seems rather high, and it is generally agreed that the actual number was much lower. Whatever the truth, the fact remains that Elizabeth Báthory's story has become one of the most infamous ever told.



Emperor Matthias as Archduke by Lucas van Valckenborch, painted in 1583


ECZET.



ECSÉD

Elizabeth Báthory grew up in her family's castle in Ecséd (now Nagyecsed) in northeastern Hungary. After she died in 1614, the people of Čachtice didn't want her buried in their village, so Elizabeth was moved into the Báthory family crypt in Ecséd.

The New England Vampire Panic

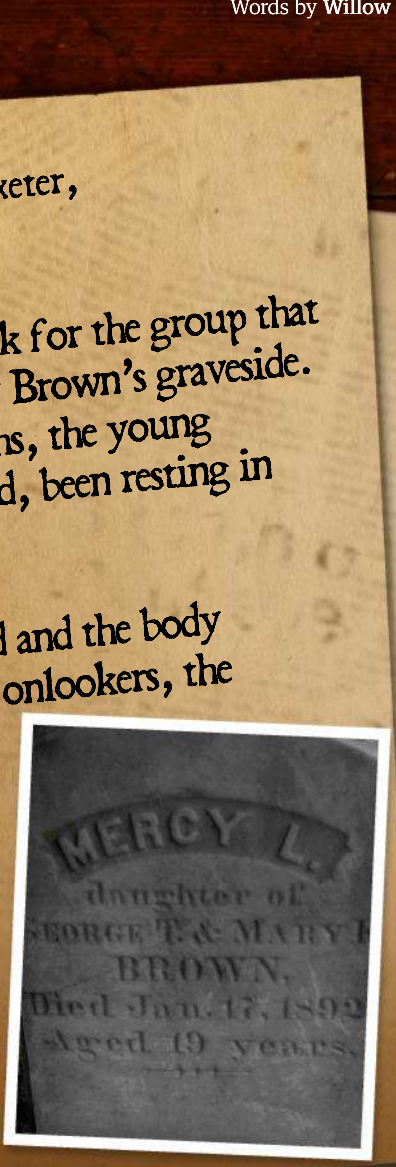
When New England families were stricken by a terrible, wasting illness that nobody could explain, were the dead really draining the living?

Words by **Willow Winsham**

Chestnut Hill Cemetery, Exeter, Rhode Island. March, 1892

There was no turning back for the group that had congregated at Mercy Brown's graveside. Dead for just three months, the young woman had not, it seemed, been resting in peace after all.

As the coffin was opened and the body revealed to the horrified onlookers, the terrible task they had come to perform was only just beginning.



The body – looking suspiciously well preserved – was examined carefully, and then, with equal care, the chest was opened in order to locate the heart. As they had suspected, instead of being dead and withered, Mercy's heart contained fresh blood. Strengthened now in their convictions, a fire was kindled on a nearby rock, the heart burned until nothing remained but ashes. The job was done, the terrible truth revealed for all to see.

Mercy Brown was a vampire.

VERMONT
NEW HAMPSHIRE
NEW YORK
MASSACHUSETTS
CONNECTICUT
RHODE ISLAND
ATLANTIC
OCEAN
MAP
of the
Southern part of
NEW ENGLAND
Compiled for
Prest Dwight's Travels.
BY
GEORGE GILLET ESQ.
1823.
Scale of Miles

So goes the legend that circulates in many variations around the New England town of Exeter, Rhode Island. Each year at Halloween, the graveyard in question is visited by countless numbers of thrillseekers, eager to share in the celebrity that has built up around the grave of Mercy Brown. And each year, reports of ghostly corpse lights, the feeling of a strange presence, and even the voice of Mercy herself, help to keep the story alive, fuelling and shaping this most popular of urban legends. Although the sensationalised recountings of the tale that have spread for over a century are better suited to a horror movie or gothic novel, they are, in fact, grounded in historical truth.

Mercy Lena Brown was just 19 years old in 1892 when she died of consumption – known today as tuberculosis – after a devastatingly short battle with the all-consuming disease. She was not the first of her family to be afflicted; her mother, Mary Brown, had succumbed to the ravaging illness just under a decade before in 1883, while her sister, another Mary, had died just a few months after. One can only guess at the despair experienced by George Brown as he watched his wife and daughters deteriorate, helpless to halt their steady progress to the grave. Furthermore, his only son, Edwin 'Eddie' Brown had started to sicken before Mercy died. Despite removing himself and his wife to Colorado Springs in the hope that a change of air might help to reverse the sickness and restore him to health, the young man had returned ever closer to death's open and beckoning door.

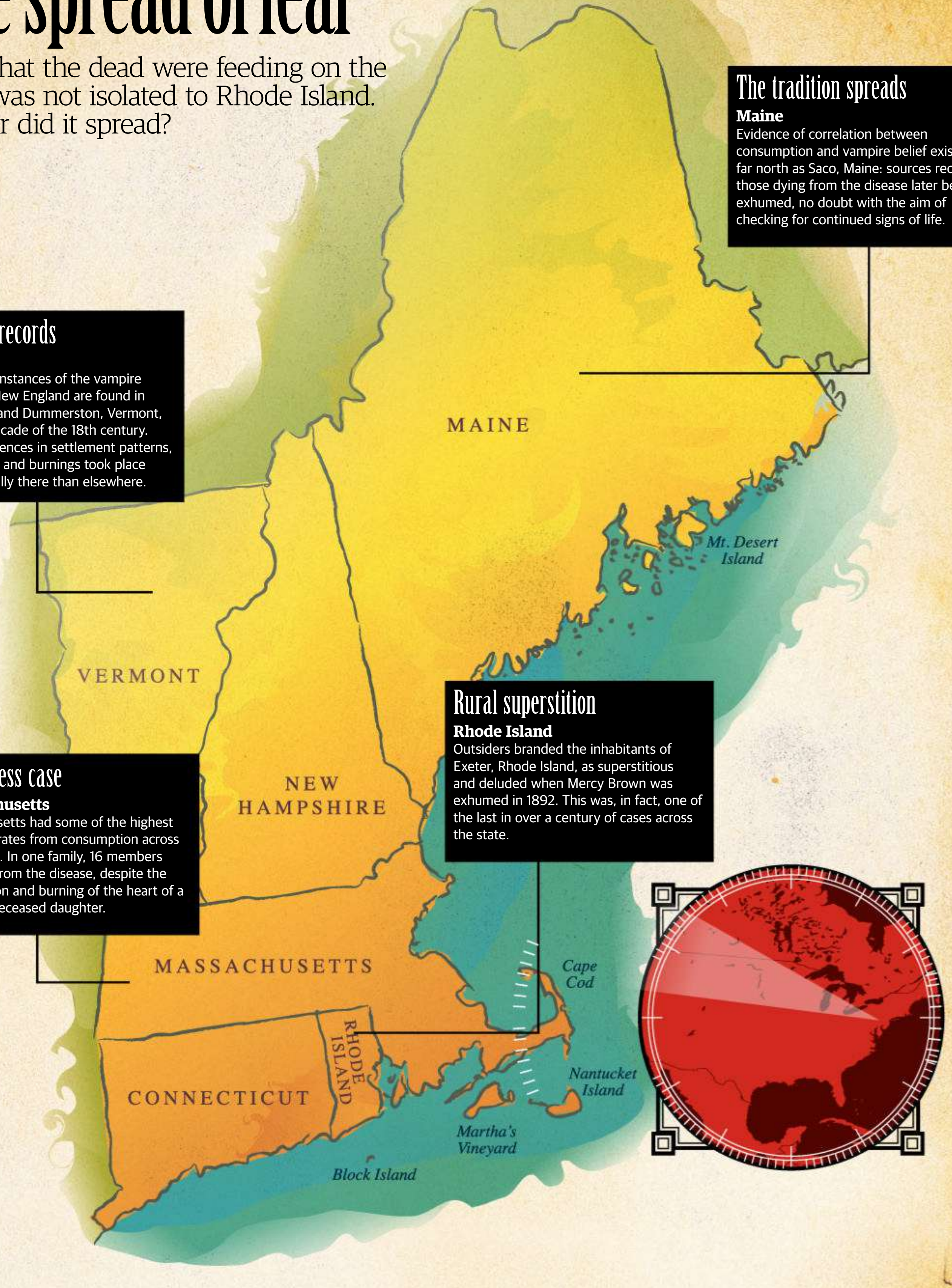
By March 1892, it was clear to all concerned that Eddie was on the verge of joining his mother and sisters. With doctors unable to cure him or offer any hope of combating the illness that held him in a deadly grip, the family, and those friends and neighbours who watched the family suffering, were close to losing hope. There was, however, one last thing to be tried. Several within the community approached George Brown and put to him a proposition. There was a belief, they said, well known and true, that when several in a family died of consumption in the way they had done in the Brown family, it was because one of the deceased was not really dead at all. Someone was feeding on the life of those left behind from beyond the grave; sucking them dry, draining the vitality from those left behind until they too ultimately perished.

Despite identifying the tuberculosis bacterium, Koch's attempts at finding a drug treatment ended in embarrassing disaster

Those who petitioned George Brown went further. What if one of his own family was the cause of Edwin's increasingly fragile condition? The only way to know for certain was to have the bodies of Mary Eliza, Mary Olive and Mercy exhumed and examined, and if there were signs that their suspicions were well founded, to deal with the bodies accordingly. Despite his scepticism that any good would be achieved, George Brown bowed to pressure and agreed to allow the exhumations to take place. Hearing of his consent, Dr Harold Metcalf, the medical examiner for the area who had witnessed Mercy's

The spread of fear

Belief that the dead were feeding on the living was not isolated to Rhode Island. How far did it spread?


MAINE
Mt. Desert Island
VERMONT
NEW HAMPSHIRE
MASSACHUSETTS
RHODE ISLAND
CONNECTICUT
Cape Cod
Nantucket Island
Martha's Vineyard
Block Island

The tradition spreads

Maine

Evidence of correlation between consumption and vampire belief exists as far north as Saco, Maine: sources record those dying from the disease later being exhumed, no doubt with the aim of checking for continued signs of life.

The first records

Vermont

The earliest instances of the vampire tradition in New England are found in Manchester and Dummerston, Vermont, in the last decade of the 18th century. Due to differences in settlement patterns, exhumations and burnings took place more publically there than elsewhere.

Rural superstition

Rhode Island

Outsiders branded the inhabitants of Exeter, Rhode Island, as superstitious and deluded when Mercy Brown was exhumed in 1892. This was, in fact, one of the last in over a century of cases across the state.

A hopeless case

Massachusetts

Massachusetts had some of the highest mortality rates from consumption across the region. In one family, 16 members perished from the disease, despite the exhumation and burning of the heart of a recently deceased daughter.

The grave of Mercy Brown lies behind the Chestnut Hill Baptist Church, the cemetery there garnering unwanted attention due to the legend of what took place there

John Phelan

If a gravestone was tilted, it was believed the Devil had left the grave in order to do mischief, and further prove that something was amiss

futile battle and rapid descent to the grave, agreed to preside over proceedings.

On 17 March 1892, the bodies of the deceased members of the Brown family were once more brought into the light. Neither the body of Mrs Brown nor that of her daughter showed any cause for concern, having decomposed in the manner to be expected given the length of time since their death. Mercy, however, was another story. Not only was the body showing little sign of decay, but when her heart and liver were removed and examined, the heart was found to still contain blood. This was taken as proof positive that Mercy was responsible for draining her brother of his strength from beyond the grave, feeding off his life-force in order to keep herself alive. Without further ado, her heart was burned to ashes there and then in the graveyard.

Neither George or Eddie Brown were present for the exhumation or cremation, their absence one of the conditions for allowing the ritual to take place. Later, however, the ailing young man was made to drink a solution containing the ashes from his sister's heart, those who backed the whole affair certain this would restore him to health now the hold of the 'vampire' had been broken.

Sadly, it was not to be. Eddie Brown died on 2 May 1892, then just 24 years old, as consumption – or the vampire – claimed yet another victim.

There is no question that at a first glance, to modern eyes, such a story reeks of barbarism and horror. Newspaper reports of the day shared such opinions, branding the rural population of Exeter as foolishly superstitious, deluded into defiling their dead in the erroneous belief that they held sway over the living. Such an interpretation however is simplistic to say the least: after closer examination of the details of the case, it becomes abundantly clear there is much more than backward superstition behind the harrowing events of March 1892.

The exhumation of Mercy Brown and the burning of her heart in an attempt to halt the progression of consumption did not take place in a cultural vacuum. In fact, this was only the latest example in a century-long tradition of such an approach to consumption in the state, and the 'Vampire Panic' as it has been termed, was actually a response to the spread of tuberculosis across areas of New England.

> "Newspaper reports of the day branded the rural population of Exeter as foolishly superstitious, deluded into defiling their dead"

Consumption was far from a new disease at the time. Known by a variety of names throughout history, a neolithic grave from around 5000 BCE is proof of the existence of tuberculosis from that far back in time. Neither was it confined to one place - Egyptians in 4000 BCE were all-too familiar with the illness. Despite the long history of the disease, fear and misunderstanding of the cause and spread of the terrible illness changed little over the centuries, and by the time the first quarter of the 18th century was drawing to a close, the number of cases of tuberculosis had actually risen sharply, with estimates suggesting a quarter of all deaths could be placed at its door.

Despite, or perhaps because of this, there were many treatments attempted in the quest to find a cure for the dreaded disease. These included strict regimes of exercise or diet, or a change of scene to more 'wholesome' air and climate. Indeed, Eddie Brown's stay in Colorado was an attempt to take advantage of the change in air, hoping it would lead to his recovery. The old staples of bleeding and leeching were also used on sufferers, as were opiates, purging and good old fashioned rest. Some remedies - such as making an incision into the chest to collapse the lungs of the consumption sufferer - would have greater impact on the progression of the disease than others when it came to hastening or otherwise a patient toward the grave, but ultimately they did very little once an individual was in its clutches.

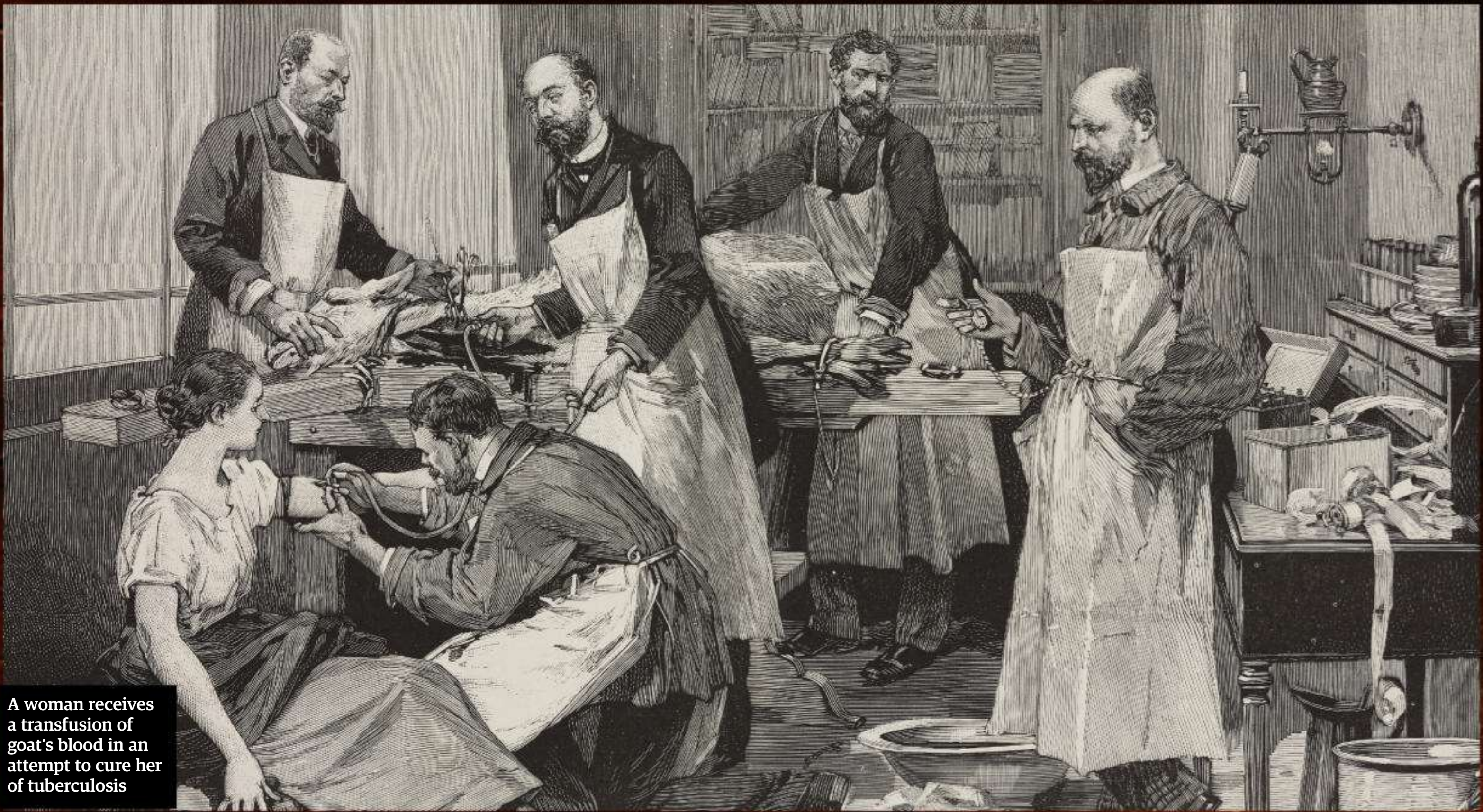
Ideas about how consumption was spread were often muddled, and far from the medical and scientific knowledge we have today. To the people of 18th and 19th-century New England, it was seen to be passed through families, with some families being more prone to consumption than others. It was also thought - correctly - that the disease was contagious, though the reasons for that were not wholly understood. All in all, it was a terrible killer that claimed entire families, often in quick succession; it must have indeed seemed as if they were being picked off, one by one, by some dark, malevolent force. It was not until the mid-20th century that the disease that had claimed so many lives was a worry of the past in the developed world, thanks to the advent of chemotherapy and effective drug treatments.

Other examples of the belief that consumption was caused by the dead feeding from the living are to be found across New England. Stukeley Tillinghast lived and died in Exeter long before Mercy Brown was even born. Father of 14 children, tragedy struck the family in 1799, when four of the youngest died, victims of consumption. Sarah Tillinghast was Stukeley's tenth child, and the first to be taken, dying at the age of 22. After the deaths of her siblings, Sarah's body was exhumed, and, as in the case of Mercy Brown, just under a century later, her heart removed and burned.

> "It was a terrible killer that claimed entire families, often in quick succession. It must have indeed seemed as if they were being picked off, one by one, by some dark, malevolent force"

In Cumberland, Rhode Island, in 1796, Stephen Staples had an odd request to make at a meeting of the town council in February of that year. He asked for permission to exhume the body of his dead daughter, Abigail, in order to try and save the life of Lavinia Chase, Abigail's sister. Permission was duly granted, under the condition that her remains were to be reburied with due dignity and respect. These early examples of such beliefs show clearly that the 'vampire' idea was well established in Rhode Island by the 18th century.

Such beliefs were not restricted to Rhode Island, either. Two cases are known of in Woodstock, Vermont. Tragedy had struck the Corwin family when consumption took hold. With one brother already dead from consumption, the doctors of the area all agreed that the way to save the second was to have the first dug up and the vital organs burnt to prevent the dead from draining the life from the living. This was carried out, and



A woman receives a transfusion of goat's blood in an attempt to cure her of tuberculosis

the ashes reburied in a pot in a hole five metres (15 feet) deep, though it is unclear whether the family was saved from further loss. The Ransom family - one of the earliest to settle in Woodstock and with great reputation in the town - also found itself under threat of extinction in the first half of the 19th century. Son Frederick, a promising university student, died of consumption in 1817, then just 20 years old. Although his father had Frederick's body exhumed and his heart burned, his mother, sister and two further brothers subsequently perished from the same illness. One brother, Daniel, was spared: living into his 80s, he recorded the incident in his memoirs, stating that the belief behind the exhumation was that burning the heart of someone who had already died of consumption would save those left behind.

In 1810 in Barnstead, New Hampshire, Reverand Enoch Hayes Place visited Moses Dennett, a tailor who was suffering the familiar symptoms of consumption. It was after this visit that he was approached by Dennett's neighbours and asked to witness the exhumation of his daughter, Annie. Annie was the third daughter out of the eight children of Moses and Betsey Dennett, dying in 1807 at the age of 21. Unfortunately, despite the exhumation, Moses Dennett died three months afterwards. A later example is from Connecticut, where in 1845 the bodies of brothers Lemuel and Elisha Ray were exhumed and their bodies cremated in the hope of saving the rest of the family, the by now familiar belief behind the procedure.

At least 80 New England vampire cases have been identified from the late 1700s to the late 1800s

Although all containing the same key components, there are interesting variations of the practice to be found. In Dummerston, the family Lieutenant Leonard Spaulding was in crisis. His daughter, Mary, died in 1782 at the age of 20 - yet another tragically young victim of tuberculosis. That was only the beginning, and large though it was, the family was being wiped out at an alarming rate; over the course of 16 years, no fewer than nine deaths had occurred, all from the dreaded plague of consumption, including that of Leonard himself. Reports of this story remark upon the belief that in such cases, if the graves of the deceased family members were opened, a vine would be found growing from one to another, working along the line. When the vine reached the grave of the latest to die, it was

The ill-fated Ray brothers

With consumption spreading through the Ray family, action was taken to break the hold of the ravaging disease

Name: Lemuel Billings Ray

Year of death: 1845

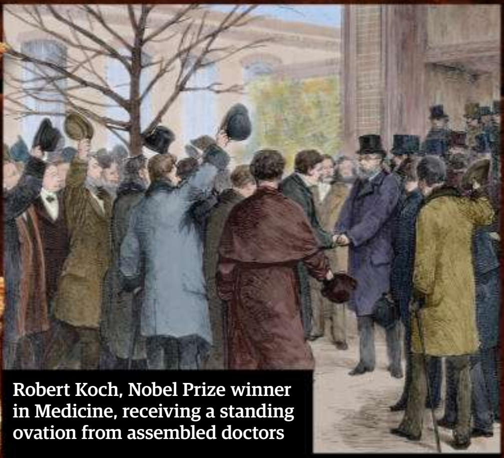
Age: 24

The eldest son of Henry B Ray from Griswold, Connecticut, Lemuel was the first in his family to fall victim to the ravages of consumption, dying in March 1845 at the age of 24. This was only the start, as his father Henry died just four years after, with brother Elisha also dying in 1851. With three members of the Ray family dead in the space of just six years, the ground was paved for what followed.

Two other brothers, James Leonard and Henry Nelson, were still living. In an effort to save them from the same fate as their father and brothers, the bodies of Lemuel and Elisha Ray were exhumed in May 1854, and according to reports of the incident, burnt to ashes. It is unclear if the ashes were ingested or whether they were reburied after the cremation had taken place. What is clear, however, is the mixed success of the 'cure'. Although Leonard lived until 1894 and thus escaped the disease that had claimed the others, Henry Nelson died the same year as the exhumation took place. Tragically, his wife and children also died of the same cause some time later. The case was reported in the *Norwich Weekly Courier* just weeks after Lemuel and Elisha were exhumed, the article leaving no doubt as to the terrible superstition that had allowed such a horrific practice to be carried out, the unsympathetic reporting matching other cases when relayed by those from outside of the communities involved.

The poem *The Griswold Vampire* by Connecticut-based Michael J Bielawa was in part inspired by the Ray family story and the fate of Lemuel and his brother, reflecting both the belief that the dead were feeding on the living that spurred the Ray family to act, and the lure such tales hold over the living over a century later.

"Lemuel was the first in his family to fall victim to the ravages of consumption, dying in March 1845 at the age of 24"

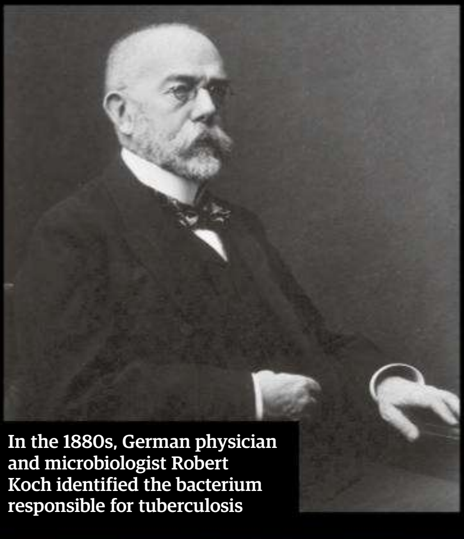

Robert Koch, Nobel Prize winner in Medicine, receiving a standing ovation from assembled doctors

A terrible killer

Consumption - or tuberculosis - was certainly one of the most feared diseases of the 19th century, more deadly than any legendary vampire

With evidence of its existence from as early as 5000 BCE, tuberculosis was part of human history for thousands of years, and to be diagnosed with the disease was tantamount to a death sentence. Far from being a simple medical complaint, biblical sources claimed the disease as punishment, while the people of 19th-century New England believed it to have a spiritual cause.

Symptoms included night sweats, fever, wasting of the body, and loss of appetite and general health. Coughing, and eventually the spitting up of blood, were sure signs that the disease had taken firm hold of its victim. Attempted cures ranged from common-sense fresh air, to the bizarre, such as milk from a pregnant woman, or seaweed under a sufferer's pillow. Despite the success of sanitoriums and the eventual understanding of the medical cause of the disease, it was not until the mid-20th century, thanks to the development of antibiotics and chemotherapy, that the spread of tuberculosis was finally slowed and then halted for good.


In the 1880s, German physician and microbiologist Robert Koch identified the bacterium responsible for tuberculosis

Vampire in the flesh

Exploring youngsters got more than they bargained for one day, but who was JB and was he a vampire?

Name: JB

Year of death: Unknown

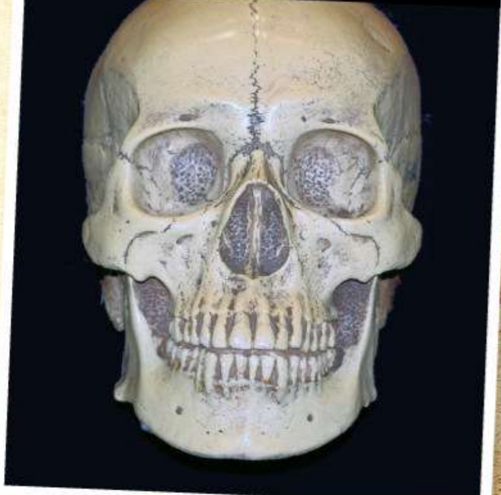
Age: 55

The burial of the individual known only to history as JB (due to the initials spelled out on his coffin lid in brass tacks) took place in the Walton family cemetery in Griswold, Connecticut, at some point before it ceased to be used for burials around 1830. JB, along with the remains of those thought to be his wife and child, was discovered in 1990 when children playing in an excavated quarry found bones and inadvertently refound the forgotten burial ground.

Buried in a wooden coffin lined with stone, JB's remains had clearly been disturbed after their original internment; his skull had been placed on top of his ribs, making a skull-and-crossbones design with his thigh bones. This was not uncommon when a corpse was suspected to have the potential to be dangerous, and precautions were often made to prevent the dead from rising in similar ways. That JB's remains were tampered with stemming from the same belief as elsewhere in New England is evident from the fact the ribs show the tell-tale lesions that indicate consumption. It has been posited that after his death from tuberculosis, JB's remains were exhumed with the intention of removing and burning his heart as seen elsewhere, with the hope of halting the spread of consumption throughout a family and into the wider community.

When it became clear that the body had decomposed too far for this to be possible, his bones were rearranged instead as a precaution to keep him from taking anyone else to the grave.

Perhaps due to the decomposition of his heart, JB's skeletal remains were dismembered instead to break the hold of the vampire



JB's remarkable story and remains hold extra fascination, as he provides a hitherto unknown physical link to the vampire practice and belief in the United States.

Based on the examination of his remains, it can be ascertained that this vampire was at least 1.82 metres (6 feet) tall and heavyset during life, though with a stooped posture due to previous injuries. JB's wife and child were buried beside him, but interestingly, their remains do not indicate death from consumption. Did the cure work this time, at least?

warned, another living victim would be claimed. The remedy was simple: along with the burning of the heart that has already been witnessed in other cases, the vine must also be broken in order to halt the terrible destruction. This was carried out in the case of the Spaulding family, and it could be said to have been a success: three further daughters escaped the disease that had taken the rest of their family, surviving into old age.

This intriguing addition was also present in a case in Willington, Connecticut. Another family, that of Isaac Johnson, was suffering in much the same way as the Spauldings. In this case, only two deaths had so far occurred, but the prognosis was not good: a third of those family members remaining were already ailing, and death was the likely outcome if the progression of the illness could not be halted. The graves of the two deceased were exhumed, and along with checking the bodies for signs of life, the graves were also searched for any telltale vines growing within.

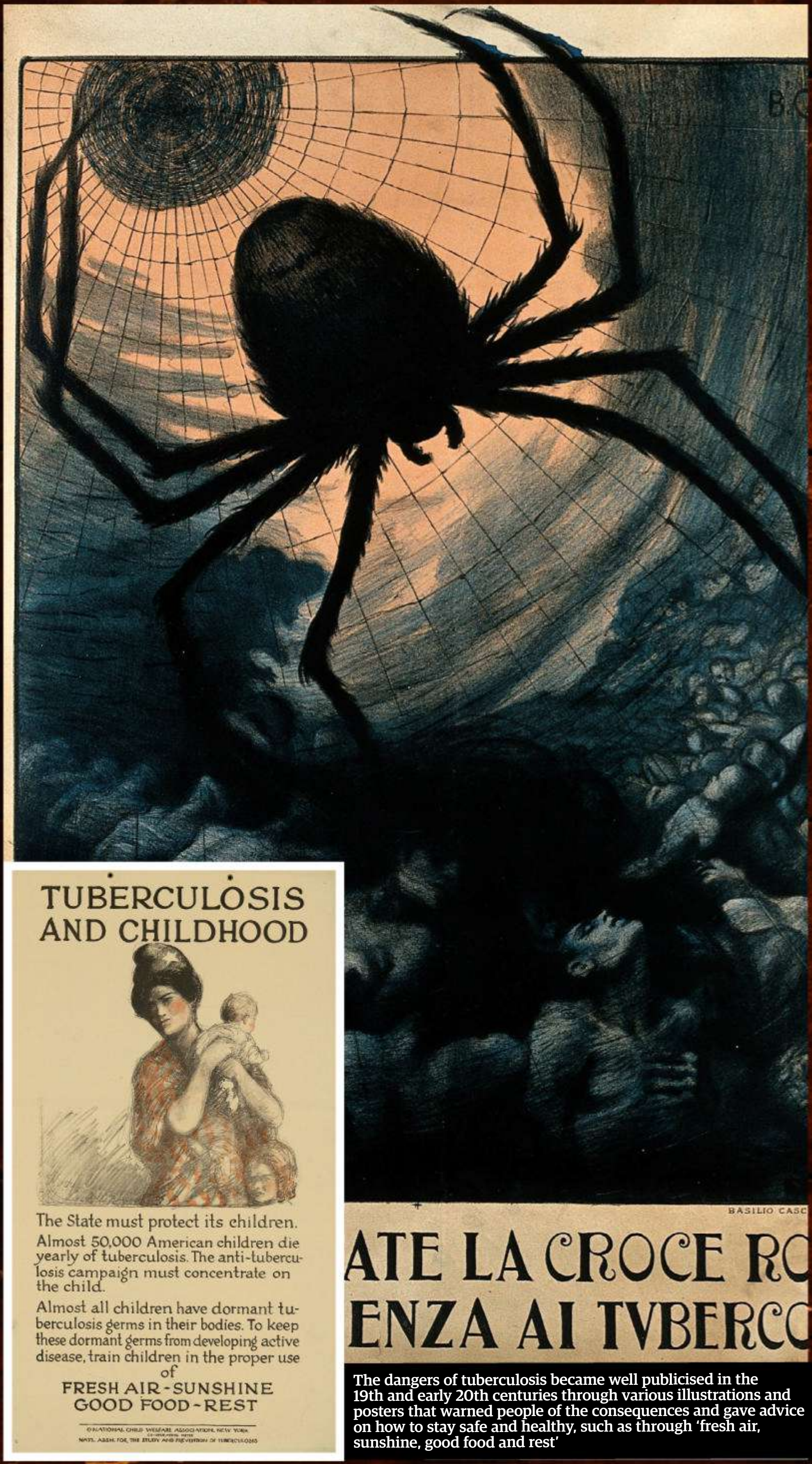
There are several theories for how the vampire 'tradition' came to the shores of New England. One is that the idea of the vampire came with immigration, those colonists who made New England their home bringing with them European vampire lore. Linked to this is the importation of writings and images, which could likewise have helped disseminate such beliefs throughout the receptive population. Another explanation is that the colonists from Europe were influenced by those Native Americans with whom they came into contact, taking on the beliefs they encountered there. A third possibility is that the creation and development of the vampire tradition

Sanatoriums sprung up across America and Europe, offering cures and a change of air for those suffering from consumption within New England occurred alongside but independent from any other influence. Instead, it was a direct response to the situation of the time: the spread of consumption and the resultant death and contagion that went with it.

What conditions made the continuation of such beliefs and practices possible? The industrialisation of New England provides the key, both to the belief in vampires and to the very disease the exhumations were intended to stop. The incredibly crowded, filthy and germ-ridden conditions in which people now lived and worked were the perfect breeding ground for tuberculosis to thrive and spread, taking hold of a family and then a community in a deadly grip, refusing to relinquish its hold. Industrialisation and consumption therefore went hand in hand, superstitious ideas ironically used to combat a disease spread by progress. It has been suggested that when a society or population is experiencing a period of crisis, there is a need for a scapegoat or cause. A body that catches the attention of those within a community at such a time, is very often said to be the cause of the troubles, and this is strikingly clear in the cases examined across New England and beyond.

Although deemed dangerous superstition by outsiders – a newspaper headline reported gleefully on the Mercy Brown case: 'Exhumed the Bodies – Testing a Horrible Superstition in the Town of Exeter – Bodies of Dead Relatives Taken From Their Graves' – for those within the communities themselves throughout New England where such beliefs were held, they were seen in a different light altogether. The newspapers of South County that reported on the Mercy Brown case, for instance, painted a picture of neighbourly assistance and concern, the exhumation and burning of the heart demonstrating the care felt for Edwin and his surviving family. Within rural communities such as Exeter, the bonds of both kin and friendship ran strong, and this was simply another outward expression of the support shared between the people who lived there, however incomprehensible that might appear to outsiders. The attempted treatment of consumption that makes us raise our eyebrows as modern-day readers is best viewed through the lens of folk medicine and healing. There is strong evidence of a tradition of home remedies and treatment throughout New England's history, and it therefore makes sense that such would be the case in attempting to combat the aggressive killer that threatened so many.

For those in New England's rural areas –and indeed throughout much of the world – illness and disease were not the scientific, medicalised province they are today. Sickness came from



TUBERCULOSIS
AND CHILDHOOD

The State must protect its children.

Almost 50,000 American children die yearly of tuberculosis. The anti-tuberculosis campaign must concentrate on the child.

Almost all children have dormant tuberculosis germs in their bodies. To keep these dormant germs from developing active disease, train children in the proper use of

FRESH AIR - SUNSHINE
GOOD FOOD - REST

The dangers of tuberculosis became well publicised in the 19th and early 20th centuries through various illustrations and posters that warned people of the consequences and gave advice on how to stay safe and healthy, such as through 'fresh air, sunshine, good food and rest' supernatural origins, and therefore it made sense to look to the supernatural in turn, both for explanations and cures. Such beliefs were criticised by the economically and socially elite within New England, who considered themselves in a position of great superiority over their more 'savage' rural neighbours. It was not just ignorant country folk, however. In Vermont, those families that believed their loved ones were being drained from the grave contained some of the founders of the towns they represented and those in positions of power – a far cry from the image of superstitious and gullible countryfolk that is often presented.

Another surprise is that such practices weren't carried out under the cloak of darkness, hidden away from civilised eyes. On the contrary, there is resounding evidence that the exhumation and autopsy of bodies in these cases were sometimes carried out and witnessed by some of the leading members within a community. In Manchester, Vermont, another early example took place in 1793. The body of Rachel, first wife of Captain Burton, was exhumed, under the belief that she was causing the illness and decline of the captain's second wife, Hulda. If the reports are to be believed, the burning of her heart, liver and lungs was carried out before the majority of Manchester's inhabitants. Those in attendance at the Corwin exhumation in Woodstock were said to have been the most important members of the community, with the ceremony itself being carried out by the selectmen of the village. The father of Abigail Staples sought – and was granted – permission to exhume his daughter by the town council itself.

An intriguing link in the history of the vampire tradition throughout New England comes in the family of William Rose. In 1872, 20 years before the exhumation of Mercy, the bodies of two of William's children were dug up, in the hope of stopping the rampage of consumption through the rest of his ailing family. As in the other reported cases, William Rose found what he was looking for; the heart and liver of his children were preserved in a way that roused suspicions, the presence of blood taken as a sign that they were feeding from those still living. The organs were duly burned, and the ashes returned to the grave, in an attempt to halt the progression of the illness.

William Rose was a man of little influence and reputation within Exeter. It has been suggested that he may well have been one of the men responsible for convincing George Brown to consent to the exhumation of Mercy in 1892. In another satisfying link for those with an eye for genealogical connections, William's second wife, Mary, was a great granddaughter of Stukeley Tillinghast himself. Although it could be said to be wishful speculation, given the pattern of stories being passed along the generations evident throughout the New England communities, it is not improbable that tales of the vampires of previous generations were passed along to the new, along with the suggested way to deal with them, thus helping to keep the tradition alive.

Were there really vampires in the traditional sense in New England? There is no evidence that those involved in any of the cases – from Sarah Tillinghast to Mercy Brown – used the term 'vampire' to describe what they believed was taking place. This was used by those outside of the communities involved, or those reporting on the cases later on, in an attempt to understand, and – in many cases – dramatise events, but not by those at the centre of things themselves. The term 'vampire' was used in newspaper reports to support the misconception that this was a savage and ignorant superstition, a handy method of both criticising and also shifting the emphasis of the story to one more sensational and supernatural. It could be argued, therefore, that it is anachronistic at best to use such terminology when discussing such events. When looking closer, however, it can be seen that although the word itself was not used, the beliefs displayed connected to the dead being able to

Nellie Vaughn's grave has been desecrated due to confusion with the legend of Mercy Brown

Did the dead rise?

The case of Nancy Young illustrates how historical fact shifts and changes to become a supernatural legend

Name: Nancy Young

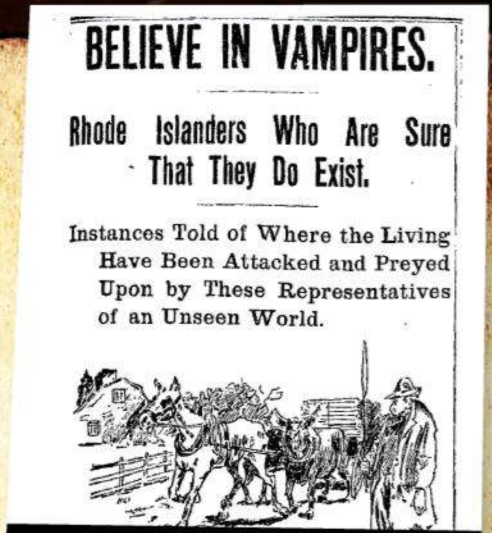
Year of death: 1827

Age: 19

Nancy was the eldest daughter of Captain Levi Young, settled in Foster, Rhode Island. Reported to be a bright and intelligent girl, well-liked and healthy, everything changed when she fell ill and went into a decline. Despite the best attempts of local physicians, Nancy could not be saved, and she died in April 1827. One of her several siblings had also fallen ill not long after Nancy, and young Almira was quickly declining into a similar state to her sister. When it became clear that others of Nancy's brothers and sisters were likewise starting to sicken, Levi Young took action.

Backed by his friends and local families, Captain Young had Nancy's body exhumed. There is no record as to the state of her body, but it was burnt to ashes. Rather than drinking the ashes themselves, it was believed by those gathered that the ill members of the family needed to inhale the smoke created by Nancy's cremation, and that by doing so, they would be well again. Despite their hopes for recovery, Almira succumbed, dying less than a year later, and several other children died in the years that followed. The youngest daughter, Sarah, appears to have been the only one to have escaped the strange disease – no doubt consumption – that had claimed so many of her siblings. Perhaps the supposed cure did her some good after all?

There was some speculation that water from the well on the Young property was to blame for the sickness that spread through Nancy's family, but this is not borne out by the fact that those who moved to the premises after the Young family were not troubled in such a manner.



BELIEVE IN VAMPIRES.

Rhode Islanders Who Are Sure That They Do Exist.

Instances Told of Where the Living Have Been Attacked and Preyed Upon by These Representatives of an Unseen World.

Outsiders viewed reports of vampire exhumations and cremations as outdated superstition, as shown by this typical newspaper headline

A legend has grown up around the story of Nancy, and like many such tales has become garbled in the telling. Sarah, not Nancy, is the first to die, and when the family return to visit her grave, the body is nowhere to be found. Things grow stranger still when the surviving family members start to dream of their departed sister; Sarah visits them each night, claiming the lives of her siblings, one after the other.

impact the living are staples of vampire-lore the world over.

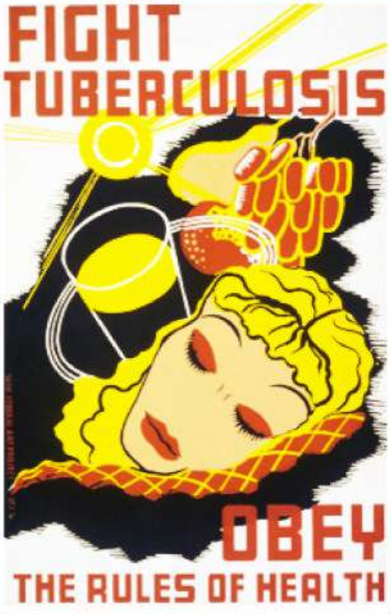
Various additions have been made to the tale of Mercy Brown over the years, reflecting the development of the vampire legend, and the influence of the media on our perceptions of this supernatural predator. One version states that her body had turned over in the grave after death, a sure sign of evil at play. The blue light that is said to be seen over her grave also reflects the transmutation of her story, from benign folk healing to a ghostly legend, full of menace. The tragedy experienced by Sarah Tillinghast has also been given a supernatural twist, with members of the family said to have complained of seeing Sarah's spectral form within their home, the dead literally visiting the living and draining them of their life force. The tale of the Corwin family from Woodstock is yet another example, showing how the basic facts of a case are taken and turned into legend. About a decade after the heart of the Corwin brother was burned and buried, it is said that an attempt was made to see what lay in the grave. Although those carrying out the excavation dug down the five metres (15 feet) to where there should have been some evidence of the burial of the ashes, the pot containing the ashes, along with the seven-ton block of granite coveting it, were nowhere to be seen. It was also said that terrible rumblings could be heard underground for several days following, along with a smell of sulphur and the sight of smoke – all the makings of a horror story right there!

Despite the variations on the main theme, in all the cases explored throughout New England, the central belief remained that consumption and the symptoms that heralded it were caused by a dead member of the family draining the living from the grave. Vampires, in any guise, are indeed the villains of the piece wherever they occur in history or folklore. In a rare turn of events, in the case of New England, it could be argued that the roles are reversed.

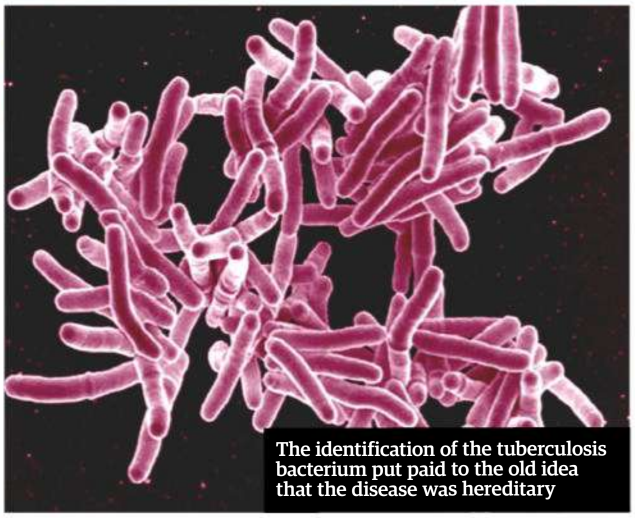
With their earthly remains disturbed by those who sought to halt a disease so little understood, death was far from the final rest hoped for. Even today, the resting places of those such as Mercy Brown are often not left in peace – grave sites are visited, intruded upon and desecrated, with little thought spared for those whose names have passed down through history as the ghosts and terrors of Halloween night, rather than the suffering individuals of flesh and bone they once were.

With their names forever tainted and tokens from their resting places considered as trophies, it is instead the vampires themselves who are the true victims.

> "It is not improbable that tales of the vampires of previous generations were passed along to the new, along with the suggested way to deal with them, thus helping to keep the tradition alive"



A mid-20th-century poster from the Works Progress Administration, encouraging sleep, sunlight and good food as a means of combating TB



The identification of the tuberculosis bacterium put paid to the old idea that the disease was hereditary

The lure of stories of vampires and the supernatural is strong. Visitors to vampire graves keep the legends around them alive and embellish them with new details

Vampires in recent history

From unusual sightings in graveyards to serial killers that consume the blood of their victims, there will always be vampire hysteria in modern society

Words by **Poppy-Jay Palmer**

Though the existence of actual vampires has now largely been disproven, every now and then a case comes along that makes people question whether there is something slightly more sinister at play than just an enthusiastic fruit bat and a couple of fake blood capsules. Sometimes those cases come in the form of a remarkable sighting, sometimes in the form of people with very unusual – and horrifying – tendencies. Either way, they often leave bystanders scratching their heads and wondering if Bram Stoker's *Dracula* was really just a horror story.

Back in the days of Elizabeth Báthory and Vlad the Impaler, it was very easy to get caught up in the panic. Nowadays, crying 'vampire' will usually have other people crying 'insane'. However, even in the 20th and 21st centuries, there was still a lot of mystery surrounding the idea of vampires living among us.

All it takes is for a handful of people to catch wind of a rumour or witness something slightly out of the ordinary in a spooky setting for the panic to return. It only takes an event like the Gorbals Vampire in 1954, which had Scottish primary school children storming a Glasgow cemetery for two days with sticks, stakes and knives, or the Highgate Vampire from the early 1970s, which caused two London 'vampire hunters' to go head to head, looking to one-up each other in a battle of who could catch a mysterious figure that haunted the grounds of Highgate Cemetery first.

However, sometimes the cases aren't so mystical. Sometimes they are simply grotesque, and enough to sicken even the most active of imaginations. Vampires can't always be banished with garlic, they don't always turn to dust in sunlight, and they definitely don't always sparkle. There is no solid definition of a modern-day vampire, but there are plenty of people who have conformed to even the most basic of descriptions of the supernatural being.

The panic was as strong as ever in Germany in the 1920s when two suspected vampires – the Vampire of Düsseldorf and the Vampire of Hanover – stalked the streets, the former drinking from the bleeding wounds of his victims and the latter ripping out his victims' throats before raping and eating them. Across the pond in the United States, even more vampires have been causing a stir, like Roderrick Ferrell and his murderous Vampire Clan, a group of teens from Kentucky who claimed to be vampires and practised drinking blood; or Caius Veiovis, a blood-drinking Satan worshipper who insisted he was a vampire and was tried and convicted of murdering three Hells Angels.

With the definition of what constitutes a vampire being truly stretched to the limit, it's getting harder and harder to deny their existence. But, as demonstrated by the following cases, one thing is for certain: when up against a vampire who is set to kill, there is very little you can do to save yourself.

Highgate Vampire

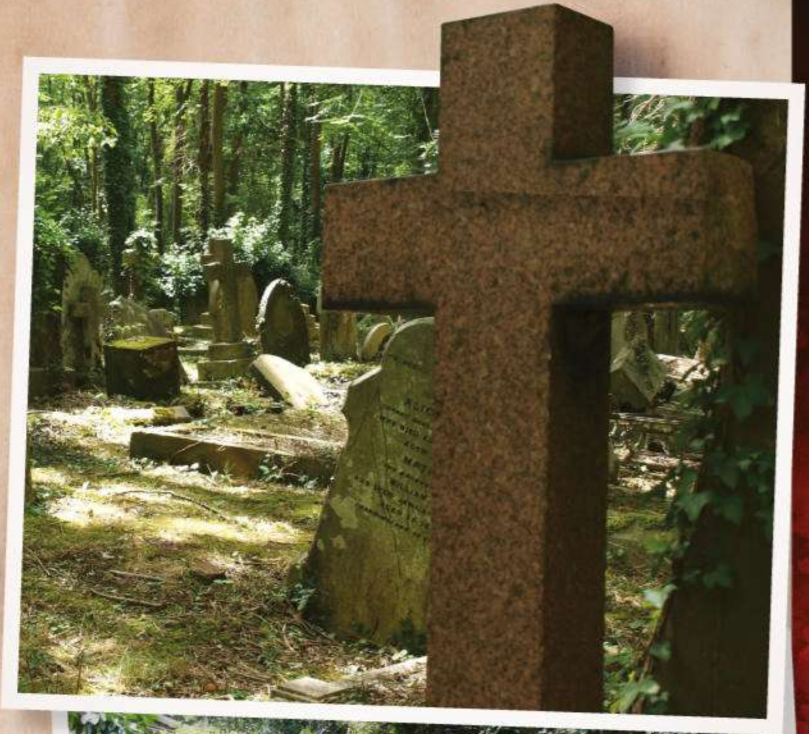
Location: Highgate, London, England
Year(s): 1970s

Highgate Cemetery in London might be famous for its status as a nature reserve, as well as for the wealth of notable people buried there, but in the 1970s it started to get a less than favourable reputation when dead animals sporting neck wounds and completely drained of blood began appearing all over the grounds. The most popular theory to explain away the strange happenings was the Highgate Vampire.

The legend started in 1969 when a group of young people, who were fascinated by the occult, roamed the grounds and one of its members, David Farrant, spent the night. He came across a grey figure, which he concluded was a supernatural force. Writing about his experience in a letter to the *Hampstead and Highgate Express* in February 1970, he asked if anyone had witnessed something similar, and several people replied.

Author and self-proclaimed vampire hunter Seán Manchester also wrote to the paper, explaining that he believed the spectral being to be a king vampire of the undead, a Medieval nobleman who had practised black magic in Romania, who had been brought to England in a coffin in the 1700s, buried and then roused by modern Satanists. He believed the right thing to do was to stake the body, behead it and burn the head.

Both Farrant and Manchester believed that they could rid Highgate of its vampire, and the local publicity surrounding their rivalry inspired a mass vampire hunt with a mob of vampire hunters swarming the locked cemetery on Friday 13 March 1970, despite police efforts to control them.



Dead animals, drained of blood and with puncture wounds in their necks, started showing up in Highgate Cemetery

Caius Veiovis

Location: Pittsfield, Massachusetts, USA
Year(s): 2000s

Caius Veiovis was convicted of murdering three members of the Hells Angels Motorcycle Club

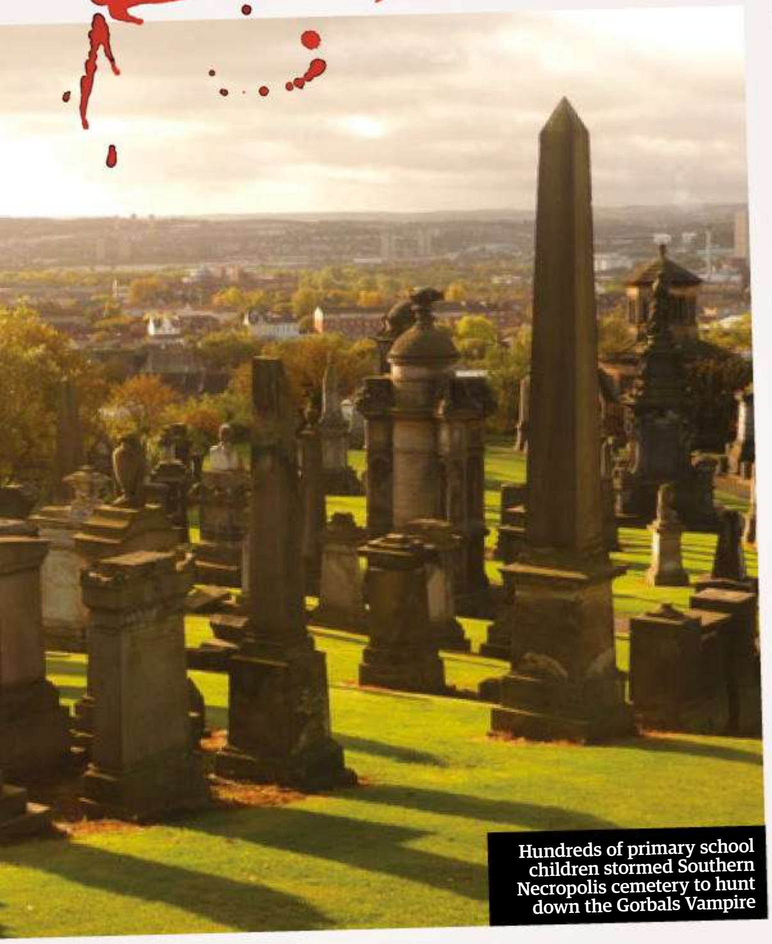
Born with a rather unassuming name, Roy Gutfinski Jr was dead set on doing something about it. In 2008, he legally changed it to Caius Veiovis, and if that alone wasn't enough to make him stand out, the rows of horn implants on his forehead and the '666' tattoo on his face ought to have done the job.

With a long history of violence and ties to Satanism, his first real victim was a 16-year-old girl. As self-proclaimed vampires, Veiovis and his then girlfriend cut her back with a razor and kissed as they consumed her blood. The injury required 32 stitches.

Not satisfied, Veiovis moved on to murder. In 2011, he kidnapped 44-year-old David Glasser, 58-year-old Edward Frampton and 47-year-old Robert Chadwell, all of whom were members of the motorcycle club Hells Angels. Part of the kidnap were two men whom Glasser was set to testify against. Ten days after the Angels went missing, their dismembered bodies were found buried just outside of Pittsfield.

Throughout the court proceedings, Veiovis insisted he was innocent. Thanks to his distinctive appearance, a Home Depot employee took to the stand as a witness for the prosecution having remembered Veiovis coming into the store to buy saws.

He was subsequently found guilty and convicted of kidnapping, witness intimidation and first-degree murder. He was given three consecutive life sentences without parole. After receiving the verdict, Veiovis screamed at the jurors, "I'll see you all in hell!"



Hundreds of primary school children stormed Southern Necropolis cemetery to hunt down the Gorbals Vampire

The Gorbals Vampire

Location: Gorbals, Glasgow, Scotland
Year(s): 1950s

On 23 September 1954, Glasgow's Southern Necropolis cemetery became a hunting ground for hundreds of primary school children on the lookout for monsters. Or one monster in particular: the Gorbals Vampire.

Following the disappearance of two young boys, Glasgow schools were plagued by rumours that the Gorbals Vampire was to blame. Seven feet tall and with "iron teeth," it was believed to haunt the grounds of Southern Necropolis. But when adults didn't believe stories of the vampire, hundreds of children took matters into their own hands and invaded the cemetery armed with stakes, knives and dogs. They hunted for hours, with more children joining them over the next two days, finally leaving when rain began to fall.

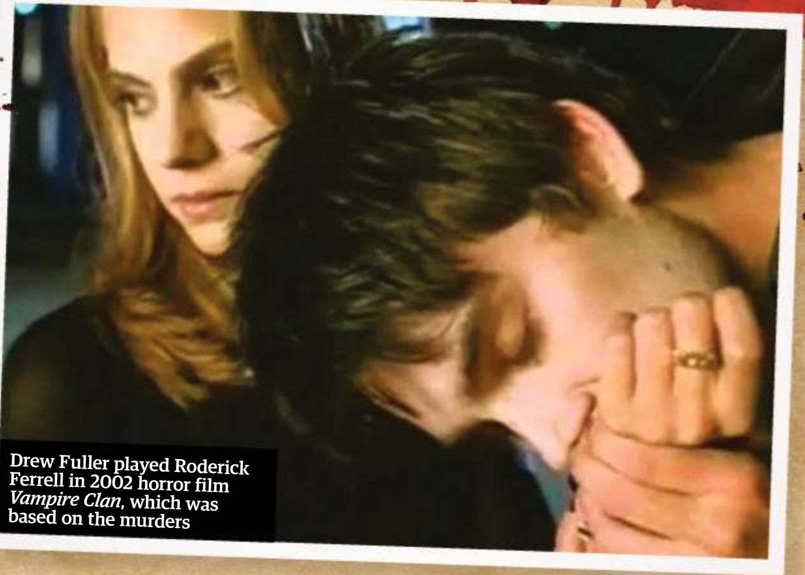
One of the boys present, Tam Smith, later told the BBC: "The red light and the smoke would flare up and make all the gravestones leap. You could see figures walking about at the back all lined in red light."

Another, Ronnie Sanderson, said: "I was there. I was in the graveyard when I was eight years old. I've been telling my wife about the vampire for years and she's never believed me."

Christians, communists and the National Union of Teachers teamed up to blame American horror comic books for putting ideas in the children's heads. Alice Cullen, Labour MP for the Gorbals, rallied behind them to get the 1955 Children and Young Persons (Harmful Publications) Act being passed in an attempt to stop it from happening again. Decades later, the act is still standing.

The Vampire Clan

Location: Eustis, Florida, USA
Year(s): 1990s



Drew Fuller played Roderick Ferrell in 2002 horror film *Vampire Clan*, which was based on the murders

On 25 November 1996, Naomi Ruth Queen and Richard Wendorf were found dead in their home, having been beaten to death following a home invasion. The killers were Roderrick Ferrell and Howard Anderson. They had entered their home through the unlocked garage and beaten their victims to death with a crowbar.

After becoming obsessed with a role-playing game called Vampire: The Masquerade, Ferrell started telling people that he was actually a 500-year-old vampire named Vesago. He was the leader of a cult from Murray, Kentucky, known as the Vampire Clan. Like Ferrell, the Clan's members believed themselves to be undead and practised drinking blood as well as other vampiric rituals.

Queen and Wendorf's daughter, Heather, was a long-time friend of Ferrell's and had run away from her home in Eustis, Florida, to join the Vampire Clan. After she described her home life with her parents as "hell," Ferrell decided to do something about it.

Having murdered Heather's parents, Ferrell and Anderson met up with another cult member, Charity Keesee, and headed to Louisiana to escape the police. However, Keesee's family tipped off authorities and the Clan was quickly caught and arrested at Baton Rouge before being extradited to Florida to stand trial for the murders.

All four teenagers were found guilty and sentenced, with cult leader Ferrell receiving a life sentence without parole. At 16 years old, he became the United States' youngest prisoner on death row. His crimes went on to inspire the 2002 horror film *Vampire Clan*.

Orthodontist Gordon Swann managed to prove that Wayne Boden was guilty with his dental records

The Vampire Rapist

Location: Ontario, Canada
Year(s): 1960s and 1970s

Many serial killers have their own signature, a mark they leave on their victims or a particular way in which they leave the bodies. Canadian murderer Wayne Boden was no different. However, his unique signature – biting the breasts of his victims – also inspired his sinister moniker: the Vampire Rapist.

His first victim was a woman named Shirley Audette. She was found dead in her home on 3 October 1969, and although she was fully clothed, she had been raped and strangled, and had severe bite marks all over her breasts. His second target was Marielle Archambault on 23 November. Boden had introduced himself and accompanied her home, and her body was later found in almost the same state as Audette's. Her tights and bra had been ripped apart, and she had been raped and her breasts savaged. Another two women – Jean Way on 16 January 1970 and Elizabeth Anne Porteous on 18 May 1971 – became victims of the Vampire Rapist over the next two years. But Boden's hunt came to an end the day after Porteous' death when he was arrested on suspicion of the murders and taken into custody.

After protesting the accusations, proof that Boden was the killer came when local orthodontist Gordon Swann was able prove that the teeth marks left on the breasts of the victims belonged to him. Swann's evidence was enough for the jury to find Boden guilty for the murder of Elizabeth Porteous, and he received a sentence of life in prison. He became the first killer in North America to be convicted based on odontological evidence.

> "She was found dead in her home, and although she was fully clothed, she had been raped and strangled, and had bite marks over her breasts"

The Florida Vampire Rapist

Location: Brevard County, Florida
Year(s): 1970s and 1980s

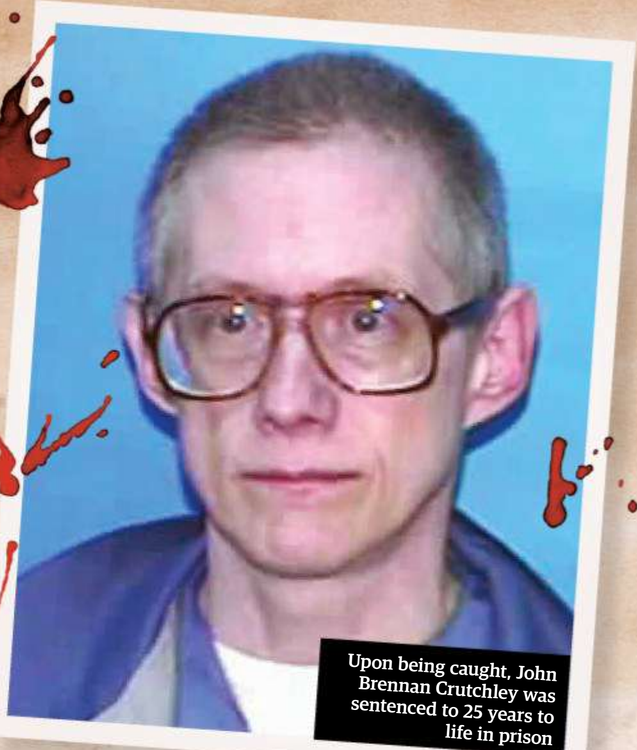
Wayne Boden isn't the only criminal to be dubbed the Vampire Rapist. Some years after Boden's arrest, another came onto the scene: John Brennan Crutchley.

In 1977, 25-year-old Debbora Fitzjohn went missing. As her boyfriend, Crutchley was heavily scrutinised and was even questioned several times following her disappearance. However, there was never enough evidence against him that could lead to a conviction. Fitzjohn's skeletal remains were found in a forest by a hunter the following year.

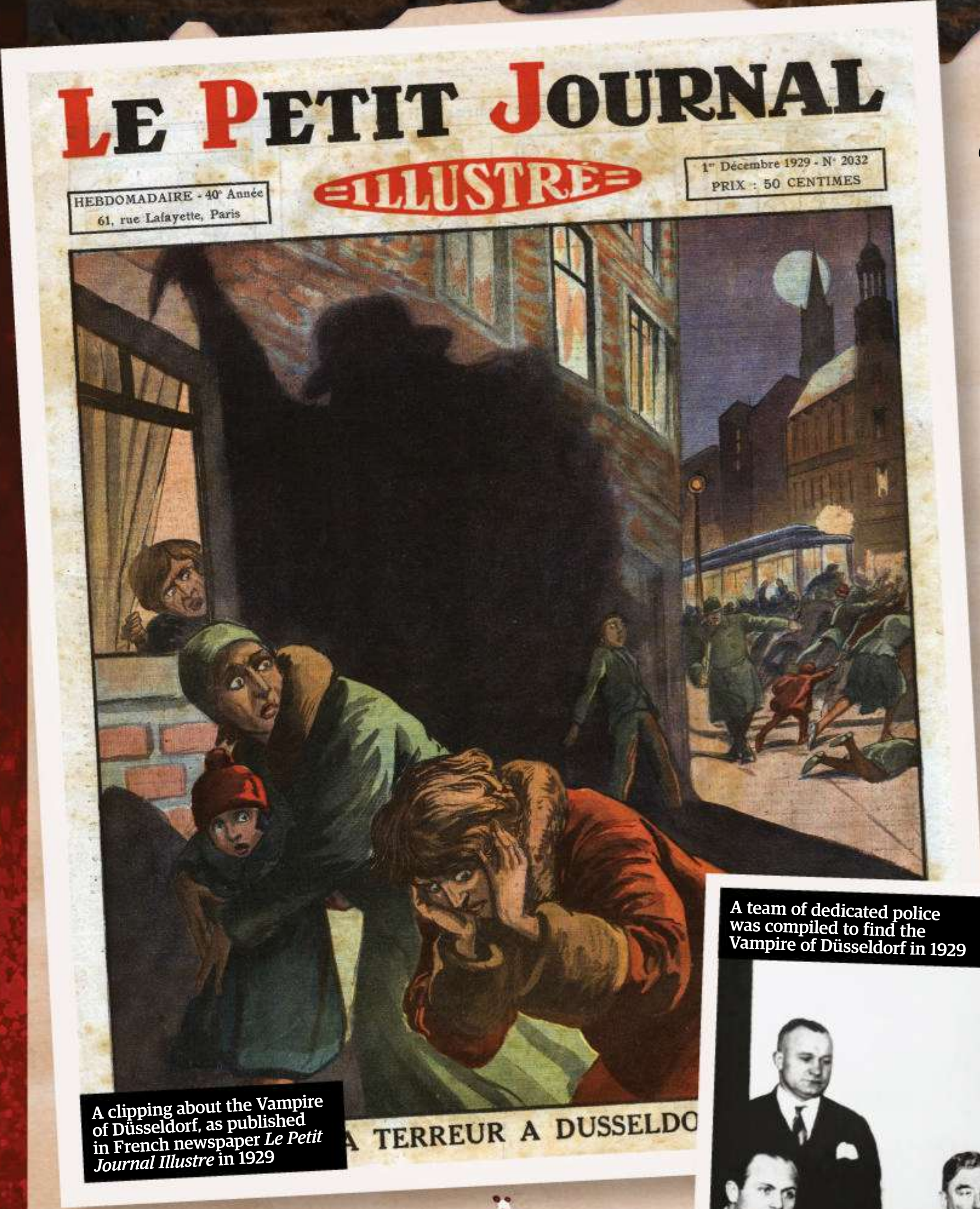
Though Crutchley had never been convicted for murder, FBI profiler Robert K Ressler insisted that he fitted the profile of a serial killer. He was believed to have killed up to 30 women, but he was only ever convicted of one single non-fatal kidnapping and sexual assault. The details of the crimes were chilling.

In Brevard County, Florida, in November 1985, a naked teenage girl was found crawling along a roadside with both of her ankles handcuffed. After being taken to hospital by a passing truck driver, it was discovered that she had not only been raped but that she also had ligature marks on her neck from where 40 to 45 per cent of her blood had been drained.

Her attacker was Crutchley. He had picked her up as a hitchhiker, choked her unconscious, immobilised her and sexually assaulted her. Once she was unable to move, he used needles to extract her blood and began to drink it, telling her he was a vampire. Crutchley was arrested and sentenced to 25 years to life in prison.



Upon being caught, John Brennan Crutchley was sentenced to 25 years to life in prison



A clipping about the Vampire of Düsseldorf, as published in French newspaper *Le Petit Journal Illustre* in 1929

> "He started to develop deranged erotic fantasies, which spurred on his violent journey to becoming a serial killer"

Peter Kürten, otherwise known as the Vampire of Düsseldorf

A team of dedicated police was compiled to find the Vampire of Düsseldorf in 1929

The Vampire of Düsseldorf

Location: Düsseldorf, Germany
Year(s): 1920s

Famously known as the Vampire of Düsseldorf and the Düsseldorf Monster, Peter Kürten wreaked havoc across the city from February to November 1929. Having already amassed quite a long criminal record for arson, petty theft, attempted murder and more, Kürten finally decided to turn his skillset to killing.

Having been subjected to abuse throughout his childhood by his alcoholic parents, Kürten started to display criminal tendencies in his teen years, most notably attempting to drown one of his peers, and frequently catching, torturing and killing animals. At 13, he turned to bestiality when his girlfriend resisted having sex with him. By the time he had reached his 30s, Kürten had developed a taste for arson and was subsequently arrested and imprisoned.

During his imprisonment he underwent severe forms of punishment, but it had an unusual effect. He started to develop deranged erotic fantasies, which spurred on his violent journey to becoming a serial killer. He found that he got sexual satisfaction from murdering women, usually by stabbing them or slashing their throats, and ejaculating as their blood trickled out. Kürten's moniker – the Vampire of Düsseldorf – was given to him as he occasionally drank the blood from the wounds of his victims.

Kürten was eventually arrested and found guilty of nine counts of murder and seven counts of attempted murder, although it was believed that he actually killed up to 30 people in total. He was sentenced to death by beheading in April 1931, and was executed at Klingelputz Prison in Cologne three months later.

The Vampire of Sacramento

Location: Sacramento, California, USA
Year(s): 1970s

Sacramento, California, got its own murderous vampire in the 1970s in the form of Richard Chase. He was fascinated with necrophilia and animal murder, and he quickly moved on to eating animals raw after he had killed them. Following a series of delusions and other mental health issues, Chase was briefly institutionalised and treated with heavy psychotropic drugs. When he was released, his drugs ceased completely. Neglecting his own mental health, he became interested in handguns and was found screaming somewhere in his neighbourhood several times, covered in blood.

Ambrose Griffin became Chase's first victim in a random drive-by shooting in 1977, but things got truly disturbing when Chase made the transition from killer to serial killer the following year. Breaking into the home of David and Teresa Wallin, Chase shot the latter and raped her dead body before carving her up with a butcher's knife. Then, in true vampire fashion, he drank and bathed in the blood of her organs, before stuffing dog faeces into her mouth.

Chase's next four murders went much the same way when he entered the home of Evelyn Miroth and killed her, her neighbour, her son and her infant nephew. He sodomised Miroth's body and drank blood from her neck before leaving with the body of her nephew. He mutilated it before consuming the brain and blood at a church that stood nearby.

However, he never bothered to clean the crime scene, and he was quickly caught by police thanks to all of the evidence that he left behind.

The Vampire of Sacramento graduated from killing animals to rape and murder

The Vampire of Hanover

Fritz Haarmann's mug shot, taken after his arrest in 1924

Location:
Hanover, Germany
Year(s): 1918-24

Completely unaffiliated with the Vampire of Düsseldorf was the Vampire of Hanover. Strangely, both serial killers operated in Germany around the same time in the 1920s, and both were believed to be vampires.

The Vampire of Hanover, also named Fritz Haarmann, became known as such thanks to his preferred method of murder: biting into his victims' necks and ripping out their throats. During his reign of terror, Haarmann got his kicks from preying mainly on boys and young men. He would look for boys who appeared lost or homeless, and quickly found that if he was kind to them, offering them food and shelter, he could easily lure them in and hold them captive in his home. But it gets even more sinister – after biting out their throats, he would rape them and eat them.

During a search for a 17-year-old runaway named Friedel Rothe, police were told that he was last seen with Haarmann. Rothe had been his first victim. Police raided Haarmann's Cellerstraße apartment and found him assaulting a 13-year-old boy, and he was subsequently taken in for questioning. Haarmann later informed police that at the time of the search, the head of Friedel Rothe was wrapped in newspaper and hidden behind the stove.

Between 1918 and 1924, Haarmann murdered almost three dozen people. He was tried for the murders of 27 boys and young men, and found guilty of 24 of them.

The Lesbian Vampire Killer

Location: Brisbane, Queensland, Australia
Year(s): 1980s

Tracey Wigginton became known as the Lesbian Vampire Killer in 1989 after committing one of the most horrendous and bizarre crimes Australia has ever seen. The first alarm bell should have been the fact that Wigginton reportedly lived on pig and cow blood in place of eating real food. Finding that killing animals for their blood wasn't enough for her, Wigginton finally escalated her tendencies at 25 years old and decided to seek out a man to murder and drain. The man she fixated on was 47-year-old Edward Baldock, a council worker and father of four.

Wigginton, her then-partner Lisa Ptaschinski, and two other women, Kim Jervis and Tracy Waugh, came across Baldock as he was walking home after a night of drinking with friends. After driving up to him and leading him to a park on the banks of the Brisbane River, Wigginton took out a knife and stabbed him 27 times, almost completely decapitating him.

Following their arrest in 1991, Wigginton was the only one of the four to plead guilty in court. The group revealed that they had vampiric tendencies, and the jury was shocked to learn that Ptaschinski had slit her own wrists before so that Wigginton could drink her blood like a vampire.

Wigginton was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison, but her violent streak didn't end there – in 2006, she assaulted an inmate and prison guard. After two parole applications, Wigginton was finally released from prison in 2012.

Wigginton cornered her victim, Edward Baldock, on the banks of Brisbane River before stabbing him 27 times

VAMPIRES IN POPULAR CULTURE

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Bram Stoker's gothic-horror novel has endured due to its unforgettable villain

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Horror's ultimate monster

Six years in the making, Bram Stoker's gothic-horror novel has endured primarily because it's an exciting yarn well told, with an unforgettable villain

Words by **Martyn Conterio**

How suitably gothic it would be if the supposed origins of *Dracula* (1897) came to the author in a lurid dream. Whatever the correct version, be it son Noel Stoker's suggestion his father ate too much crab meat for supper, which led to an intense nightmare; a scenario hinged on an old wives' tale; or the direct information gleaned from Stoker's notes. If a nightmare was indeed the root cause, it was more clearly primal and sexual in impulse and origin. Stoker began his novel's development with snatches of imagery and dialogue, as if indeed half-remembered from a twisted reverie. In March 1890, Stoker jotted down: "Young man goes out - sees girl one tries - to kiss him not on the lips but throat. Old Count interferes - rage and fury diabolical ... This man belongs to me I want him." Six days later, he writes again: "Loneliness, the Kiss 'this man belongs to me'."

The dream - if it was a dream at all - found its way into the book as one of its most intensely erotic and freaky scenes. In other words, the original impetus was not discarded as Stoker set about writing. It remained. Solicitor Jonathan Harker, who has travelled abroad to oversee the sale of homes to a foreign prince from a land far away, is warned off venturing around Castle Dracula, as parts of it are structurally dangerous (though we know, too, it's Dracula's way of ensuring the Brit doesn't see anything too weird). Harker finds himself falling asleep in a room, awakening to find three women with red eyes, fangs and ruby lips staring intently at him, whispering among themselves. "There are kisses for us all," one of them says, directly drawing us back to Stoker's initial inspiration. Harker is powerless, caught in what he calls a "dreamy fear," somewhere between repulsed and turned on by the spectacle of three animalistic but deeply attractive female vampires before him. Then, all of a sudden, Count Dracula bursts into the room, angry as hell because "this man belongs to me!"

Published in the summer of 1897 by Archibald Constable & Company, *Dracula* was not an immediate success, though it did earn favourable reviews. Slowly, the vampire's journey as an iconic figure in popular culture began, built up over the years and undoubtedly helped by the 1920s'

theatre adaptations in the West End and Broadway, then a 1931 Universal Horror movie directed by Tod Browning and starring Bela Lugosi, and then countless vampire-themed films in its wake, including the Hammer Pictures cycle starring Christopher Lee. You might never have read the book nor seen a movie or stage play, but you will have heard the name Count Dracula; you'll know he is a vampire, hates garlic, casts no reflection in mirrors, sucks the blood of the living and dies by having a stake thrust into his heart (though that's not how he's killed off in the novel).

Abraham Stoker was born on 8 November 1847 in Dublin. He went on to study at Trinity College, Dublin, and worked for a time as a theatre critic at the *Dublin Evening Mail* (coincidentally owned, in part, by *Carmilla* author Joseph Thomas Sheridan Le Fanu, *Carmilla* having had a huge impact on Stoker's own vampire tale). By 1878, newly married Stoker and his wife, Florence Balcombe (Oscar Wilde's ex), moved across the Irish Sea to London, England, where Bram took up a position as business and theatre manager at the Lyceum Theatre. He lived in Chelsea, at 18 St Leonard's Terrace and later at 27 Cheyne Walk. Despite very long hours answering to the beck and call of his employer, the actor Henry Irving, Stoker found time to write reviews for the *Daily Telegraph*, write numerous short stories, and work on his novels (*Dracula* was not his first). Stoker's life was so jam-packed, it's a wonder that he found any time at all to write. While the writer did not spend seven years writing the novel, he most certainly began planning it in 1890, and it was finally published in 1897.

It is for certain the author intended the epistolary format for the novel from the get-go. Although a style popularised by Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White* (1859), as *Dracula* is a work of gothic imagination, even if it arrived way past the original gothic-horror boom, the book harks back further in time and in spirit, to Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), a work of make-believe passing itself off as being translated from an old Italian text, forming a literary double deception. Stoker's novel follows suit because it crafts a story from entirely fictitious – though realistically penned – journals, newspaper reports, diaries and memorandums, all collected as an account of something extraordinary having occurred in our secularised, post-Enlightenment world – a rapidly changing world, a world of globalised capitalism and scientific advancements, where not even technological marvels can stop supernatural forces such as vampirism. In a way, as the novel exists at a meeting point between the Victorian era and modern times, Stoker tapped into a vein of horror literature whereupon human characters are grounded in an everyday world, and faced with an

Dracula fever in Whitby

The North Yorkshire fishing village entered literary history when Stoker chose it to appear in his novel

Whitby, North Yorkshire is atmospheric in both the radiance of summer and the deep melancholy gloom of winter. With its windswept moorland backdrop, ruined 7th-century abbey atop a cliff, nestled houses, quaint cobbled streets and grey sea stretching into the horizon, the place screams 'gothic' to all visitors. As a setting for a horror novel it feels perfect. It is at Whitby where foul Dracula makes landfall and begins to target Lucy Westenra and embark on his wicked scheming. The author liked to spend time at St Mary's churchyard, jotting down names for potential characters from the headstones. One, Ann Swales, appeared in the novel as Mr Swales. He also used local news and recent events for his book, specifically the notorious 1885 shipwreck off the beach at Whitby, a Russian vessel named *Dmitry*. *Dmitry* became ghost ship *Demeter*.

Stoker holidayed in the fishing village in July and August 1890 at the suggestion of friend and employer Henry Irving, who had once run a circus in the village. Stoker stayed at a guesthouse at 6 Royal Crescent. Alone for a week, waiting for his wife and son to join him, Stoker found plenty of time to talk to locals, soak up the place and research his fermenting novel. The town's association with Stoker is commemorated with blue plaques, noting the places where he stayed and visited, with Whitby today a magnet for goths and the novel's fans alike. Celebrations and festivals help continue Dracula's life in the sleepy village.

The coastal town of Whitby, North Yorkshire, will forever be associated with *Dracula*

inexplicable force, which seems preposterous, but therein lies its dreaded power. The literary effect of the epistolary format is akin to 21st-century found-footage horror movies, where shoddy camera work, snot-nosed characters crying into the lens, and abandoned tapes discovered by chance achieve an illusion of realism, even though surrounded or spurred on by fantastical events. As with the epistolary style, found-footage lends itself very well to the creation of suspense through its aesthetic means. As *Dracula* the novel so focused on the latest ideas in anthropology, evolution, psychoanalysis, criminology, xenophobia and politics, *Dracula*'s sub-textual engines are fiery and potent to this day. Written in the fin de siècle period, much of *Dracula* feels modern even now, as well as brilliantly highlighting humankind's consuming primal urges and drives, here masked beneath Victorian prudery and hypocritical morality. Count Dracula is an undeniably sexual entity and force so formidable and dangerous, representing the id unleashed. Read it however you like – as a sex-obsessed armchair Freudian, understanding it as a Christian morality tale or examining its political and racial xenophobic traits, *Dracula* equally works as a cracking horror yarn full of atmosphere, action and adventure.

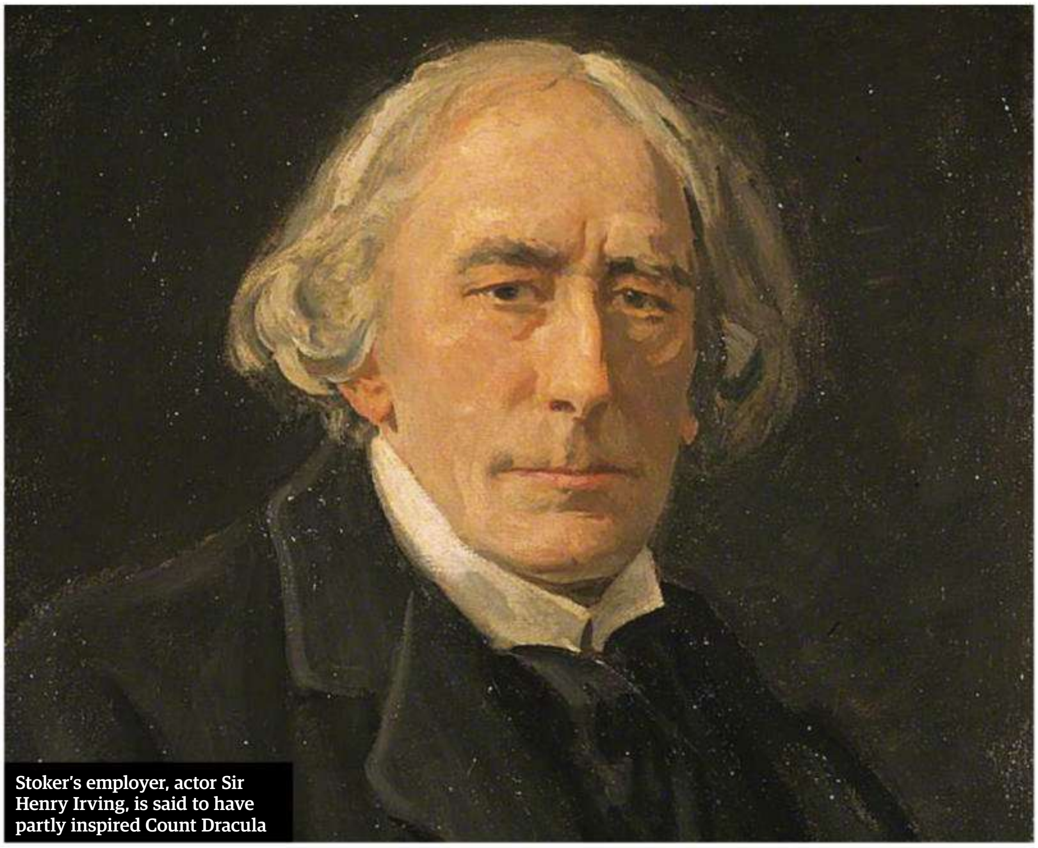
Bram Stoker's first ever print run for *Dracula* in 1897 totalled 3,000 copies

With his day job at the Lyceum taking up the vast majority of his time, Stoker's *Dracula* took close to a decade to be published. Neither was Stoker's research particularly scholarly, despite his university education at Trinity College, Dublin. He never undertook a trip to Transylvania, though he knew London intimately and holidayed in Whitby. In total, he compiled 124 pages of notes and a plot outline that more or less stayed the same from initial conception to finish. The holiday in Whitby proved to be especially important, while some scholars believe he was inspired by Slains Castle in Aberdeenshire, where he holidayed yearly. The development of the book took interesting turns. Count Dracula was originally Count Wampyr. The iconic character, Abraham Van Helsing, was initially three separate people: a detective, a psychic research agent and a professor. As with Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, Stoker initially envisaged setting his story in Austrian Styria, but ventured further east into the Carpathian Mountains and Transylvania, and as with Whitby, forever cementing these places in literary history.

At a table in Whitby library, he scribbled down parts from *Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia*, and this is where we know he came across the name Dracula. The author of the tome translated 'Dracula' as 'devil', but it can also mean 'dragon', deriving from the Romanian 'drac' with its origins in the Latin 'draco'. This fortuitous bit of research fired off something in Stoker's mind, as he made a note of the name and, decades later, began an academic argument as to whether he knew – and based – his vampire aristocrat on Vlad Tepes. Other works Stoker took from during his years of research included *Transylvanian Superstitions*, a work on Transylvanian geography and customs, *Round About the Carpathians, Book of Were-wolves, Baedecker's Southern Germany and Austria,* and he made visits to the reading room at the British Library, housed then at the British Museum in London, where items on Vlad Tepes were certainly available, such as the 1491 Bamberg propaganda pamphlet with woodcut print of Vlad and caption: "A wondrous and frightening story about a great bloodthirsty berserker called Dracula who inflicted such un-Christian tortures such as with stakes and also dragged men to death along the ground."

Slains Castle, Aberdeenshire, is another Scottish location that inspired Stoker

"So much of Dracula feels modern even now, as well as brilliantly highlighting humankind's consuming primal urges and drives, here masked beneath Victorian prudery and hypocritical morality"



Stoker's employer, actor Sir Henry Irving, is said to have partly inspired Count Dracula

A blue plaque marking Bram Stoker's home in the Chelsea neighbourhood of London

There is scant evidence in Stoker's research notes that the writer of *Dracula* knew much at all about Vlad III, the Wallachian warlord, who fought against the Ottoman Empire and earned his nickname 'The Impaler' by driving large wooden stakes through his enemies and leaving them to rot on the field of battle, let alone based his character on him. It might also explain the historical inconsistencies in Count Dracula's backstory, as gleaned from early scenes with Jonathan Harker, where he recounts his family's illustrious heritage. Was Stoker talking about Vlad the Impaler or his father? "Who more gladly than we throughout the Four Nations received the 'bloody sword,' or at its warlike call flocked quicker to the standard of the king? When was redeemed that great shame of my nation, the shame of Cassova, when the flags of the Wallach and the Magyar went down beneath the Crescent? Who was it but one of my own race who as Voivode crossed the Danube and beat the Turk on his own ground? This was a Dracula indeed!"

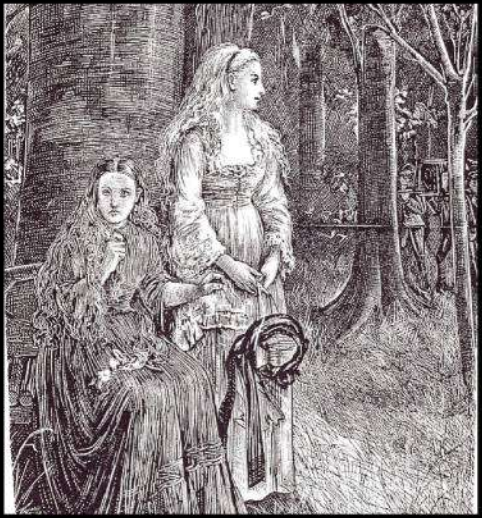
Bram Stoker's novel has been published in 44 different languages around the world

Then there's the 'fact' stated in the book that Count Dracula tells us he is a boyar and a Szekely – descendants of Attila the Hun, when Vlad Tepes was Wallachian, the boyars his enemy – he instigated purges against them and hailed from the Basarab family. Castle Dracula, too, is located at the Borgo Pass and so nowhere near the castles associated with Vlad the Impaler. Conclusive proof might be slim, leading researchers to pull from the text itself evidence Stoker knew about Vlad the Impaler, but none of these gaps or inconveniences has stopped the association from thriving.

The 1992 blockbuster adaptation directed by Francis Ford Coppola, starring Gary Oldman, Winona Ryder and Anthony Hopkins, explicitly married together real history and the devilish count by starting the film with Vlad Tepes denouncing God and becoming cursed. After a battle, the Turks despatch a message (by arrow) into Dracula's castle,

5 things that influenced Stoker

Bram Stoker was influenced by a range of things: famous novels, the latest developments in science and the feminist movement

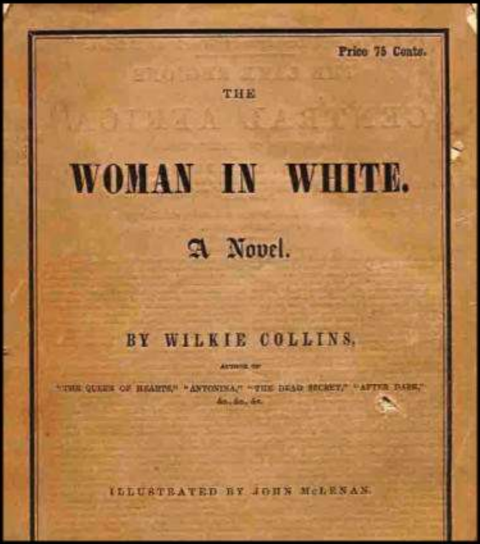


CARMILLA

Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1871-72) provided Bram Stoker with a plot dynamic to follow, described by James L Campbell Sr as "attack, death-resurrection and hunt-destruction." They also share a first-person narrative voice, though Stoker went for the epistolary format, pushing first-person to include multiple perspectives, along with the vampire's seduction of his chief victim, the dreamlike reality of certain scenes and the search for rationality amid supernatural events.

TRANSYLVANIA: ITS PRODUCTS AND ITS PEOPLE

The novel's beginning, as Jonathan Harker sets off into eastern Europe, needed to be researched by Stoker. A key text he read was Charles Boner's *Transylvania* (1865). Among his research papers was information cribbed from chapters such as 'The Land Beyond the Forest' and 'Law and Lawlessness'. The book also helped Stoker with the region's geography and its arcane customs, bringing authentic flavours to the novel's eerie start.



Price 75 Cents.

THE

WOMAN IN WHITE.

A Novel.

BY WILKIE COLLINS,

AUTHOR OF

"THE QUEEN OF HEARTS," "ANTONINA," "THE DEAD SECRET," "AFTER DARK,"
&c., &c., &c.

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN McLENAN.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE

A huge hit during the Victorian era, *The Woman in White*, by Wilkie Collins, served as a guide to Stoker, just as *Carmilla* did. Like *Dracula*, Collins' book is written in epistolary form, the use of multiple voices, and so crafted great deals of suspense from this literary device. Collins and Stoker knew each other from the days when the Theatre Royal produced a stage adaptation of *The Woman in White*.

The Kilmarnock Arms, Cruden Bay, where Bram Stoker holidayed. He wrote parts of *Dracula* here

"A whole tourist industry has been created based on the slimmest of associations between Dracula and Vlad"

informing his bride that he was killed, forcing her into a grief-fuelled act of suicide. Count Dracula chucks his mighty sword into a giant stone cross, which then streams blood, from which he drinks a cup. He is forever in union with Satan and becomes nosferatu. It's a terrific piece of inventive backstory for the character, turning the novel's evil monster into a Romantic-type figure of sympathy, dooming himself for eternity out of love and anger. Perhaps the most blatant attempt to wed fact to fiction is another film, *Dracula Untold* (2014), which went all out to feature the historical Vlad Tepes in a newly formed plot exploring how he became undead.

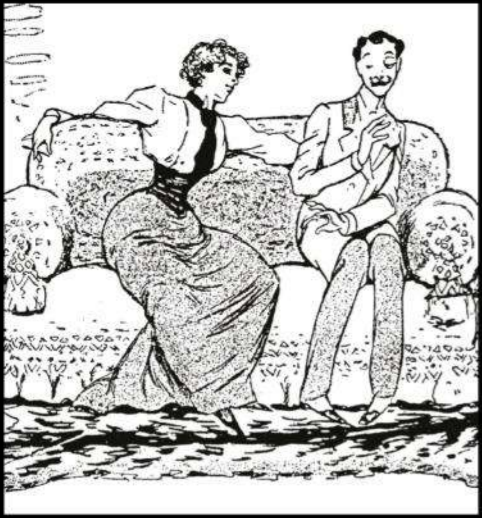
The link between Tepes and Dracula is so strong and unstoppable, it feels almost immaterial as to whether Stoker knew much about the medieval ruler at all. A whole tourist industry has been created based on the slimmest of associations between Dracula and Vlad the Impaler, ones that shall probably always remain, no matter how fanciful or bogus. One castle in Romania, Bran Castle, is today touted as Dracula's Castle, using the 'Dracula' name to tie in with the Stoker novel and as if the fictional Castle Dracula is based on – or is – Bran Castle. All we can say for sure is Stoker knew of a voivode (war leader) who styled himself 'Dracula', and Vlad Tepes (and his father, Vlad II) was known as Dracula, having taken up membership of the Order of the Dragon, a monarchical group for European nobility devoted to defending European (read: 'Christian') lands from incursions by Turks. From this, they stylised themselves 'Dracul'.

But that doesn't make Count Dracula Vlad Tepes. Some fans and researchers still mad-keen to marry the fictional vampire with Vlad III have pointed to Stoker's acquaintance with Hungarian historian Ármin Vámbéry, who – they claim – filled in the writer with all the details pertaining to Vlad the Impaler. However, there is no record of any such conversation in either diary or research note form. They met on two occasions only. Again, supporters of the theory turn to the text for verification. "As I learned from the researches of my friend Arminius of Buda-Pesth, he was in life a most wonderful man." However, why would Stoker have left out such a deliciously gory detail about Vlad's penchant for stakes – especially given the association with vampires – if he'd known about it? What Stoker's notes reveal was a man who had very limited time to research his book. And the piecemeal, restricted

"Stoker examined male anxieties of women's liberation through the fates of Mina and Lucy"

CESARE LOMBROSO

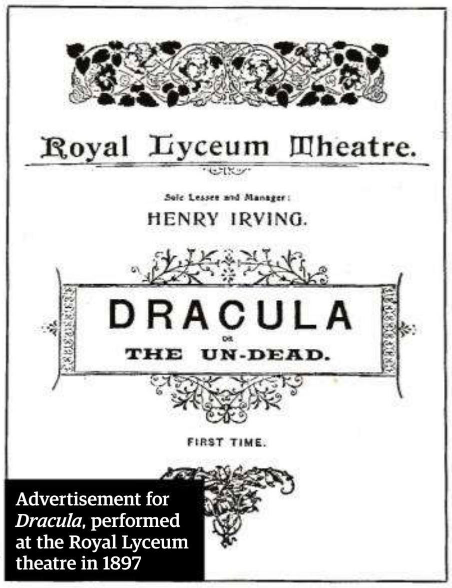
Criminologists and anthropologists hopped up on proving pseudo-scientific theories about human degeneracy, and this concept of criminality inspired Stoker's conception of the evil Count Dracula. Italian theorist Cesare Lombroso believed that people were born criminal, for instance, and in one scene in the novel, he's referenced by Mina Harker: "The Count is a criminal and of the criminal type. Nordau and Lombroso would so classify him."



THE NEW WOMAN

A feminist forerunner to the suffragettes, critics have debated Mina Murray-Harker as a virtuous representative of the 1890s' New Woman figure, while Lucy Westenra's sexual frankness and promiscuity shows the downside. Mina also takes an active part in the story, other than victim, with her crucially aiding the vampire hunters make sense of Dracula's scheme. Stoker examined male anxieties of women's liberation through the fates of Mina and Lucy.

Bram Stoker was born in this house in Marino Crescent, Clontarf, Dublin, in 1847



Royal Lyceum Theatre.

Sole Lessee and Manager:
HENRY IRVING.

DRACULA
OR
THE UN-DEAD.

FIRST TIME.

Advertisement for *Dracula*, performed at the Royal Lyceum theatre in 1897

timeframes in between the hectic demands of his day jobs highlight this.

It is rather ironic that the most famous vampire in literary history and pop culture does not meet his end in what has become 'traditional' fashion: the wooden stake hammered into the heart. Mina Harker's journal entry records the king-vampire's end at Castle Dracula, with Stoker's crafting memorable imagery for the exciting climax of the novel, such as this vivid aftermath detail: "Castle Dracula now stood out against the red sky, and every stone of its broken battlements was articulated against the light of the setting sun."

Dracula meets his end by knife. More specifically, two knives. "But, on the instant, came the sweep and flash of Jonathan's great knife. I shrieked as I saw it shear through the throat; whilst at the same moment Mr. Morris's bowie knife plunged into the heart." This double action was "like a miracle; but before our very eyes, and almost in the drawing of a breath, the whole body crumbled into dust and passed from our sight." While Dracula's violent fate is untraditional, the deaths of the female vampires – Lucy Westenra and the 'weird sisters' – are what readers and filmgoers would understand as keeping in line with genre expectations. In the final pages of the novel, Van Helsing searches the castle for the three female vampires, taking with him a blacksmith's hammer, and sets about his "wild work." As with the scene featuring undead Lucy in the crypt, the writing is intrinsically fused with erotic sensibilities. Literature's most famous vampire hunter, upon finding the brides' graves in the old chapel, describes querulous feelings in his memorandum as: "She was so fair to look on, so radiantly beautiful, so exquisitely voluptuous, that the very instinct of man in me, which calls some of my sex to love and to protect one of hers, made my head whirl with new emotion."

Stoker's contribution to vampire literature is both in keeping with rich and varied folklore and the presentation of his own set of revisions and innovations. One of the most startling of all is that Dracula – in the novel – can walk around in the daylight, though with weakened abilities. He can make himself look younger too. When he is killed, the body crumbles to dust. He doesn't like mirrors, can appear as mist, casts no shadow, has the ability to turn others into vampires, and is repelled by garlic and crucifixes.

Two books in particular had a great bearing on how vampires operate in his novel, one of them perhaps surprising, as it was based on another folkloric creature entirely: the werewolf. One of Dracula's traits involves the ability to control animals and shape-shift, and he does so on several occasions, most notably setting a shore at Whitby in the guise of a great black dog. Two pages of

Mrs Stoker versus Nosferatu

After infringing upon copyright laws, the first great horror film was almost lost, when a court ordered all prints destroyed

F W Murnau's *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* (1922) is cinema's first successful attempt at adapting Bram Stoker's novel, *Dracula*, for the big screen. The German director and his team thought they could get away with simply changing the names of the characters – Count Dracula became Count Orlok, Mina Murray became Nina, Jonathan Harker was renamed Hutter, and Renfield was now Knock – without stumping up the cash to gain filming rights. The action, too, ditched Whitby and London in favour of locations in northern Germany. But the arc and general spine of the story remained unaltered from the original: an aristocratic vampire descends upon the human population to spread his malefic influence.

The film was partly influenced, too, by set designer and producer Albin Grau's experiences as a soldier stationed in Serbia during World War I. Grau described in magazine *Bühne und Film* (1921), where he penned a short piece to promote the film in his homeland, how an old peasant told him vampires were real and the region – the Balkans – had been "pursued and tormented by those monsters forever," before the man theatrically made the sign of the cross.

One person who took a keen interest in the film's existence was Florence Stoker, widow of Bram. She sued Prana Film company for copyright infringement – and won her case. When Prana Film went bankrupt and couldn't afford financial restitution, the German courts ordered all copies of the film destroyed. Despite this court order, prints of Nosferatu were saved and the iconic horror movie lives on.

Max Schrek in F W Murnau's iconic silent movie *Nosferatu*. The filmmaker was sued in court for copyright infringement notes were taken from S Baring-Gould's *Book of Were-wolves* (1865), a work that inspired Stoker with one of the novel's most iconic lines: "Listen to them - the children of the night. What music they make!" *Book of Were-wolves,* too, with its mention of "green taper with blue flame," gave Stoker another memorable visual idea for the book. The writer penned: "mem. Green taper with blue flame in Count's house," which found its way into the story as Jonathan Harker makes his journey to Castle Dracula at night in the carriage driven by the count disguised as a coach driver: "Suddenly, away on our left, I saw a faint flickering blue flame."

Transylvanian Superstitions (1885) by Emily Gerard led Stoker to ditch the *Carmilla*-style Austrian Styria setting in favour of Transylvania, having been impressed by Gerard's writings on the rich abundance of folkloric creatures - from goblins to witches and everything in between. "Transylvania might well be termed the land of superstition, for nowhere else does this curious crooked plant of delusion flourish as persistently and in such bewildering variety," the author wrote, with more than a hint of western intellectual superiority. But the move into regions of unknown truly provided Stoker with the thematic contrast he needed and from it received. As Dracula tells Jonathan Harker: "We are in Transylvania; and Transylvania is not England. Our ways are not your ways, and there shall be to you many strange things."

The title change to *Dracula* was arrived upon at the last minute. As per Stoker's notes, we know he dithered about naming his book either *The Undead* or *The Dead Undead* - neither of which is a particular grabber. The contract signed and dated 20 May 1897 mentions *The Un-Dead*. Somebody, whether it's the publisher or Stoker himself, decided the original title choices were too nebulous and weak compared to *Dracula*. Of course, *Dracula* did not have the recognition it does today, but it is far more mysterious. Whoever decided to change the title is a hero, for the selection proved a very smart move, one that resonates to this very day. We might never willingly invite the blood-drinking monster into our homes, but Count Dracula is a household name.

Previously thought lost, the original typescript of *Dracula* was rediscovered in 1980

"The move into regions of unknown truly provided Stoker with the thematic contrast he needed and from it received"

Dracula's Guest

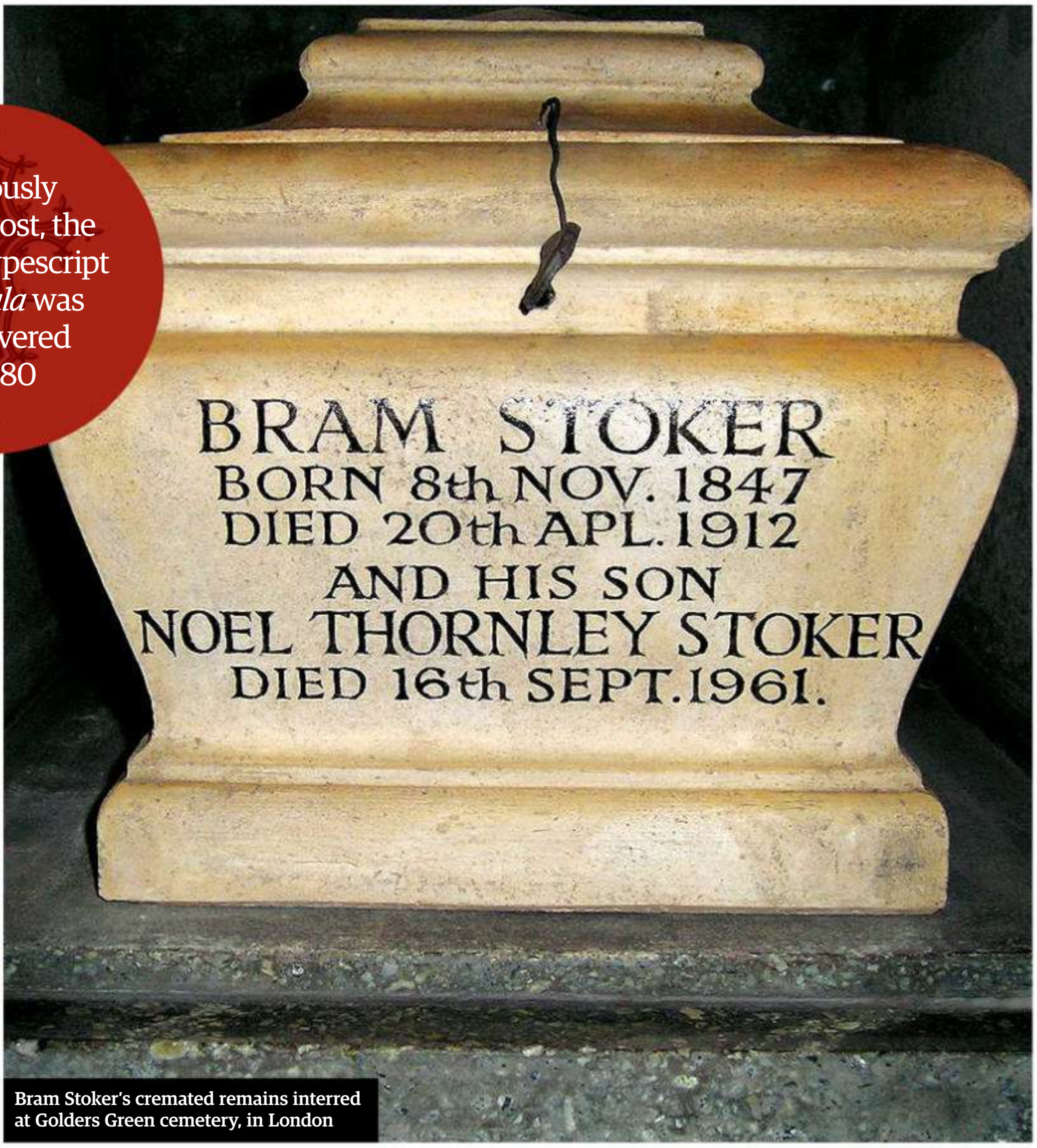
Stoker's post-humously published short story was derived from character and scenario notes he made for *Dracula*

DRACULA'S GUEST
AND OTHER WEIRD STORIES

Dracula's Guest **appeared in a short story collection published two years after the author's death**

Dracula's Guest, published as a short story in 1914, is fantastically eerie and full of memorable imagery. It has long been touted as a missing chapter from *Dracula*, excised from the original by the publisher's demands, as they were concerned about length. Another suggestion puts it that Stoker was worried about its superficial similarities to *Carmilla* (as the vampire who appears in the story is female, the Countess Dolingen of Gratz).

Evidence, however, suggests that while Stoker might well have initially planned it as the start of his novel – the story as published begins with Harker leaving Munich – it was never included and then removed. First of all, the tale doesn't fit the first-person narrative voice of the book and, secondly, the nameless Englishman's characteristics do not match the Harker we know. Harker's peculiar experiences in Munich were omitted by Stoker, and the reason for the removal was possibly due to tightening the narrative structure and deciding to commence his journey from a demarcation point in western Europe into the mysterious and unknown eastern provinces. The novel begins with Harker's journal entry: "Left Munich at 8.35 p.m., on 1st May, arriving at Vienna early the next morning." There is zero mention of his troubled time in the German city.



Bram Stoker's cremated remains interred at Golders Green cemetery, in London

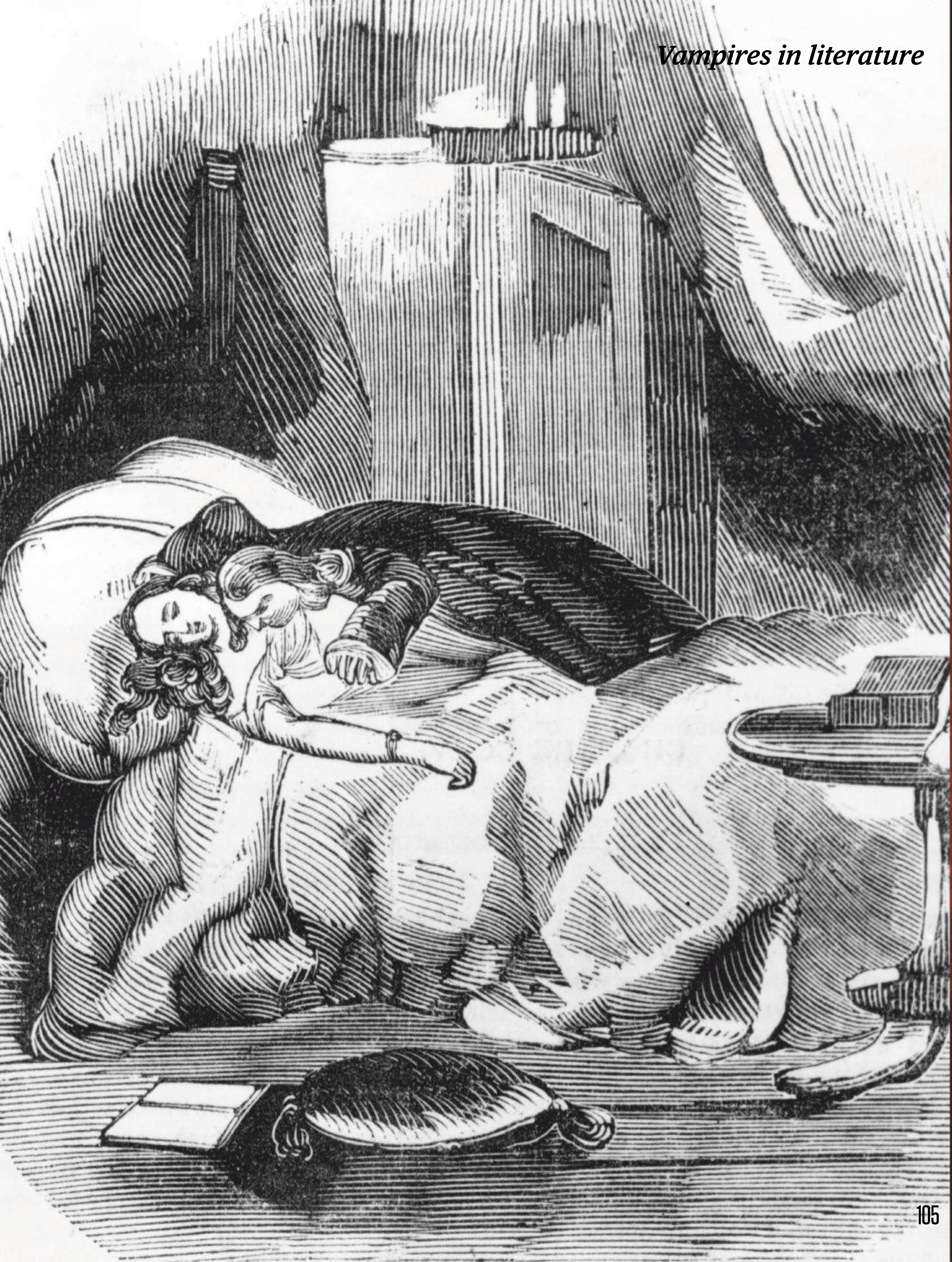
Vampires in literature

Vampires rose to literary prominence thanks to 19th-century European writers. Since the 1800s, they have proven to be an enduring, malleable creature of nightmare

Words by **Martyn Conterio**

It all comes down to blood. Who wants it and who has it. As *Dracula*'s poor, mad Renfield cried out in Doctor Seward's asylum: "The blood is the life! The blood is the life!" While the dramatical effect of horror literature is often described as having a biological outcome – making the reader's 'blood run cold' – it courses through our veins sticky and warm. Yet the vampire has little use for cold blood; it would turn his or her stomach, putting them off a good meal. Neither can the vampire sup from the dead, as coagulated blood offers no sustenance. For when vampires feast, a victim willingly or unknowingly succumbing to the leech-like monster's demands and gluttonous appetite, the blood must gush, stream, spray, explode, shower, run river-free from neck puncture wounds, gaping slash marks, decapitations, limb tears. Then, the gluttonous fiend can drink with abandon. And as the revenant is sated and revived by nocturnal violent assault against the living, said human's life force ebbs away, the skin grows pallid, all energy saps, death is met. Some might transform and live on as nosferatu.

There exist vampire myths from all corners of the world. Where this multicultural belief or foundation comes from, nobody really knows. But they fed into literature, down the centuries. Bloodthirsty 'edimmu' from ancient Assyria and Babylon haunted the living and drew energy from them. In India, the 'vetala' was a blood-sucking old crone. In Malaysia, where the vampiric monsters were exclusively female, they were also described as beautiful and alluring. From ancient tales, folkloric traditions, 18th-century Eastern European investigations into supposedly real-life cases, 19th- century literature and onward, the vampire has been interpreted in numerous ways, but with the advent of psychoanalysis, vampire mythology entered the dark territory of the human psyche, breaking away from folkloric or overt religious readings, whereupon they generally reflected our deepest, darkest existential fears surrounding morality and the eternal battle between good and evil.



Vampires in popular culture

In Victorian times, once writers began to infer sexual symbolism and themes into proceedings, vampirism began to reflect more and more upon carnal pleasures and fixations. While the vampire is like an elemental force of supernatural terror, its energy is often very sexual. Jonathan Harker's deeply erotic encounter with the brides of Dracula is one of the sexiest in all of literature. "All three had brilliant white teeth that shone like pearls against the ruby of their voluptuous lips. There was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear. I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire," Stoker described Harker's complicated emotional response. In *Carmilla* (1871), Sheridan Le Fanu proffered the theme of same-sex attraction and ventured into even more transgressive territory: incest. How did the vampire become the preeminent gothic monster of literary imagination? The answer is simple: sex, sex, sex!

A spate of 18th-century cases of vampirism in Eastern Europe proved influential on 19th-century writers

The vampire transgresses the laws of nature, breaks taboos and sacrilegiously debases the sanctity of the body and the belief that there is everlasting peace in the afterlife. The apex predator remains immortal but is damned, reviled, shunned. A monster to be feared, but it is also vulnerable and can be destroyed via a host of methods. World culture is filled with vampiric creatures – the array of variations, types, versions and forms is positively dizzying, though all share the same chief characteristic: they are supernatural beings and drink blood. While 20th-century film standardised vampires into a set of more or less strict criteria and scenarios, Hollywood directly riffing on Count Dracula or arthouse, and Eurotrash cinema preferring the erotic possibilities afforded by lesbian-themed *Carmilla*, attempting to assign key characteristics and traits in literature – and indeed folkloric culture – isn't so easy. In other words, not all vampires wear capes. And as there is more than one way to skin a rabbit, there are hundreds of ways to despatch a vampire.

Vampire fiction took off like a rocket in Europe in the 19th century due to the previous century's philosophical debates, spurred by post-Enlightenment thinkers dealing with reported cases of vampirism in the Balkans and the furthest reaches of Eastern Europe, at the time an unknowable land so far off the map it was terra incognita to those great brains frequenting the salons of London and Paris. For the high-minded likes of writers such as Voltaire, talk of vampires as a real and definite phenomenon was downright absurd, more the product of overactive imaginations than ontological fact. Ignorance of bodily decay and local superstitions caused an outbreak of vampire fever in 18th-century backwaters. Religious schisms in Europe also provided a sort of curtain or veil between west and east, with the Greek Orthodox church spurring on beliefs in the blood-drinking undead with pontifications on what happens to the bodies of the ex-communicated after their owners are deceased. The cadre of the damned included suicides, apostates and the unbaptised. These teachings were alien to the Roman Catholic Church, which was largely obsessed with witches and other types of heretic. Yet western priests and monks such as Antoine Augustin Calmet produced *Treatise on the Apparitions of Spirits and on Vampires or Revenants of Hungary, Moravia, et al* in 1751.

Irish writer Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu (1814-1873) made a hugely important contribution to vampire fiction

As many educated artists were au fait with Greek mythology, figures such as the lamia – a succubus with the ability to shape-shift – served as inspirations. The lamia/succubus also helped form the femme fatale archetype, which, like

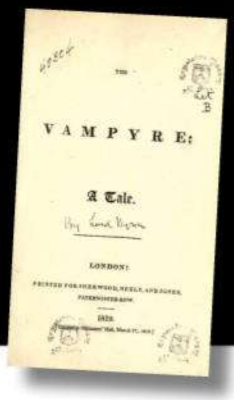
"The vampire transgresses the laws of nature, breaks taboos and sacrilegiously debases the sanctity of the body and the belief that there is everlasting peace in the afterlife"

eaking
dawn
clipse
new
moon
wilight
The *Twilight* novels by Stephenie Meyer were a publishing and film sensation. The vampire figure was no longer a demonic threat but a romantic hero

Top 5 most influential vampire novels

The Vampyr

Big things have small beginnings. Published in 1819, *The Vampyr* is in fact a short story (and something of an urtext for the aristocratic-bloodsucker variation of vampire fiction), but its influence on the genre is positively enormous and far-reaching. The plot involves a young Englishman named Aubrey, who travels Europe with friend Lord Ruthven, who, it turns out, is a vampire.


THE

VAMPYRE:

A Tale.

By Lord Byron

LONDON:

Carmilla

Sheridan Le Fanu's 16-chapter novella was first published in serial form, in short-lived literary endeavour *The Dark Blue*, and its legacy is likely to prove immortal. Not as famous as *Dracula* and other more modern texts, it introduced lesbianism to vampire mythology (though doing so discreetly), which filmmakers have since had a field day with. *Carmilla* also gives us literature's first vampire hunter in Baron Vordenberg.

the vampire, eroticised horror literature, uniting repression and desire, sex and death, love and repulsion, dream and nightmare. Romantic poet Robert Southey's epic, *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801), featured a female vampire taking the guise of the hero's lover, and takes its place in history as among the very first vampiric visions to appear in the English language.

"And o'er the chamber of the tomb
There spread a lurid light
Oneiza stood before them. It was She, -
Her very lineaments,-and such as death
Had changed them, livid cheeks, and lips of blue;
But in her eyes there dwelt
Brightness more terrible
Than all the loathsomeness of death."

Vampire fiction as a distinct genre only begins proper with John Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819), a work originally attributed to Lord Byron, the controversial noble and popular poet, who was said to be in love with his sister and whose adventures abroad scandalised polite society. Byron positively loathed the attribution and was offended when people claimed it the best thing he'd ever written. *The Vampyre* established what became known in literary studies - thanks to Sir Christopher Frayling's excellent work in this field - as the Satanic Lord, a sort of literary extension of real-life monsters such as Gilles de Rais or Elizabeth Báthory, aristocrats whose crimes have echoed down the centuries. The Satanic Lord vampire is the most enduring type in pop culture, certainly in cinema, and Polidori's story had a major influence on all other works that followed on.

"The Satanic Lord vampire is the most enduring type in pop culture, certainly in cinema, and Polidori's story had a major influence on all other works that followed on"

Romantic-era writers helped cement the most popular iteration of the vampire: the Satanic Lord

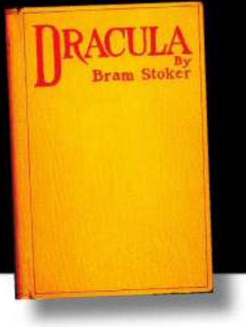
The success of *The Vampyre* produced a boom in vampire stories across Western Europe, many pale imitations of Polidori's, but which helped establish the creature in the public's imagination, a popularity that has lasted for nearly 200 years and will no doubt continue unabated. While writers in the West focused on the Satanic Lord and then the femme fatale variation (springing from the Greek myth of the lamia), Russian writers, such as Nikolai Gogol (*The Viy*, 1835) and Alexis Tolstoy (*The Vampire*, 1841 and *The Family of the Vourdalak*, 1839) were hugely inspired by folkloric/peasant tradition and beliefs when writing their unique additions to vampire fiction lore, reflecting the great differences between Western and Eastern European approaches to the blood-sucking monster. *The Viy* involves a young student and a fair maiden cursed by vampirism, while *The Family of the Vourdalak* sees an aristocrat besieged by a family of the undead making his escape at the story's climax on horseback with the vampires hot on his heels. *The Viy* is also noted for following a very early gothic literary tradition of falsifying information. Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) was said to be a translation of a surviving Italian text, only it wasn't at all. Gogol presented the mythic, frightening creature Viy - the king of the gnomes, with its iron face and eyelashes that droop - in a similar vein. There was no Ukrainian folkloric myth of the Viy. Gogol had made it up. *The Viy* is an example of how open and richly varied Eastern European takes on vampirism were compared to those in the West.

Anne Rice reinvigorated vampire fiction with her 1976 novel *Interview with the Vampire*, which then spawned a series

Among thousands of vampire novels, some achieved global success for their innovations and became classics

Dracula

Like Le Fanu, fellow Irishman Bram Stoker penned what turned out to be a landmark moment in vampire literature, one which ensured - arguably above all others - the creature's firmly fixed position in culture. Quite simply put: there is no other vampire so instantly recognisable and iconic as dastardly Count Dracula. First published in 1897, making it more a gothic pastiche than authentic gothic, Stoker's novel's influence is truly seismic.



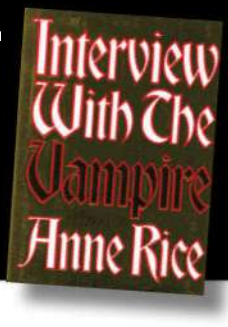
I Am Legend

Richard Matheson's sci-fi horror novel unleashed vampirism onto the world as a virus. *I Am Legend* (1954) sees suburbanite Robert Neville as the last man on Earth, or so he thinks, who spends his days fortifying his home against former neighbours, who have turned into blood-thirsty hordes. Matheson's existentialist horror tale had a profound effect on apocalypse fiction and George A Romero's zombie classic, *Night of the Living Dead* (1968).

SF MASTERWORKS
I AM LEGEND
RICHARD MATHESON

Interview with the Vampire

Anne Rice launched her best-selling *The Vampire Chronicles* in 1976 with *Interview with the Vampire* (later adapted into a film starring Tom Cruise). A return, indeed a revival, of the gothic vampire figure - delivered with a Deep South twist - the novel brought with it swooning romance, sensuality and homoerotic undertones. Partly inspired by the untimely death of Rice's five-year-old daughter, she bashed out the hit title in just five weeks.



The Stress of Her Regard

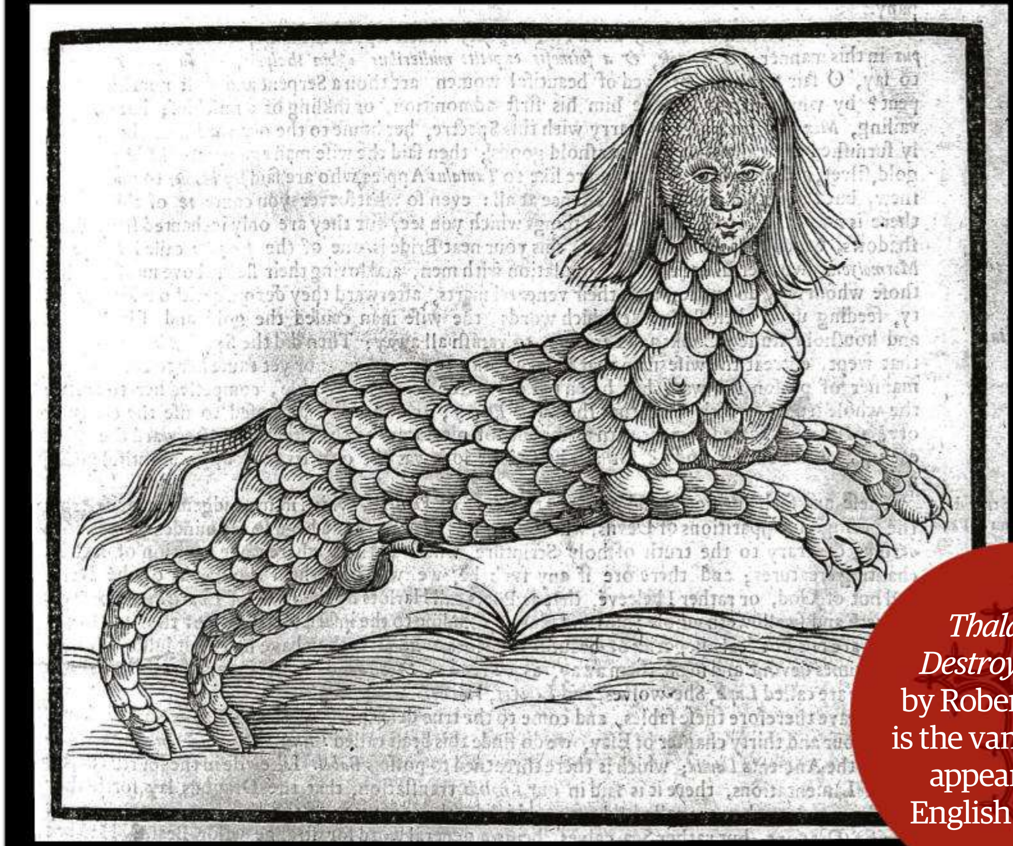
Tim Powers' 1989 novel crafted a vampire adventure story featuring romantic poets responsible for gothic horror icons

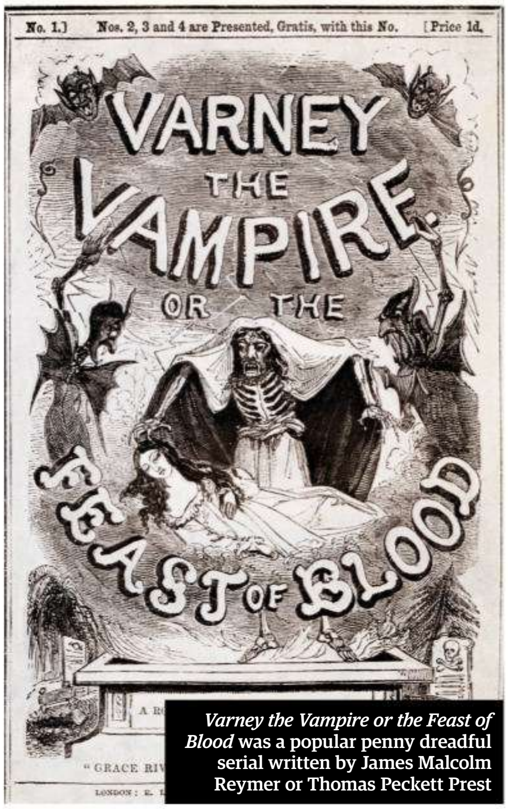
Tim Powers' acclaimed and award-winning horror fantasy novel, *The Stress of Her Regard* (1989), ingeniously mixed fact and fiction. The story concerns a young man, Michael Crawford, who is an English surgeon specialising in childbirth and delivery. On the night before his wedding, he gets drunkenly lost in the courtyard of an inn and accidentally gets hitched to a lamia posing as a stone statue. On his wedding night, the supremely jealous lamia murders Crawford's living significant other.

Fleeing the scene and escaping to London, he meets medical student John Keats, who knows all about these dreaded vampiric creatures. From here, Crawford journeys to France and Switzerland, where he ends up running into Percy Bysshe Shelley, Lord Byron, Mary Shelley and Dr John Polidori.

In crafting a storyline from the doomed lives of Byron, Shelley, Keats and Polidori, all of whom died in their 20s and 30s, Powers returned vampire fiction to its English language roots in Romanticism and the archetype of the femme fatale, which so obsessed the poets. Intriguingly, the title of the book comes not from the works of Coleridge or Southey, nor Keats or Byron, but 20th-century American poet and writer Clark Ashton Smith's *Sphinx and Medusa*, written in a cod 19th-century Romantic style:

> "They gaze across the past … Yet thought must see
> That eve of time when man no longer yearns,
> Grown deaf before Life's Sphinx, whose lips are barred;
> When from the spaces of Eternity,
> Silence, a rigorous Medusa, turns
> On the lost world the stress of her regard."




No. 1.] Nos. 2, 3 and 4 are Presented, Gratis, with this No. [Price 1d.
VARNEY THE VAMPIRE OR THE FEAST OF BLOOD

Varney the Vampire or the Feast of Blood was a popular penny dreadful serial written by James Malcolm Reymer or Thomas Peckett Prest

Varney the Vampyre (1848) was first published in a serial form known as the 'penny dreadful', and catered to a mass readership looking for sensationalist storytelling and excitement. The author was either James Malcolm Rymer or Thomas Preckett Prest, two prominent writers of the format. The epic ran at a thunderous pace, its audience captivated by the evil aristocrat – Sir Francis Varney – and his diabolical schemes. Clearly written on the fly, this approach led to narrative confusion and contradiction. There was the debate as to whether Varney was a supernatural creature or not, because the writer gave conflicting information. *Varney* was collected and published in book form in the 1850s and introduced into fiction another major iconographic detail: fangs. Varney isn't killed, either, by a Van Helsing (*Dracula*) or Baron Vordenberg (*Carmilla*) type hunter – he commits suicide by jumping into Mount Vesuvius.

Carmilla (1872) is an important next step in Victorian-era vampire literature because the chief fiend is a woman and most definitely not a Satanic Lord/Byronic vampire. This novella would also have a very significant impact on *Dracula* author Bram Stoker. Set in Eastern Europe (Styria), the seduction aspect of the vampire-victim courtship ritual is greatly amplified, too. The baseness of the creature's attack is transformed into romantic longing with lesbian overtones (Carmilla's victims are exclusively female), and her evil deeds appear as a symptom of her status as the undead, a compulsion driven by sexual desire and loneliness as much as the need to feed. Carmilla – revealed in the end to be Countess Mircalla Karnstein – is a villain with whom we can sympathise. Carmilla the aristocratic teenaged vampire longs for companionship and pursues Laura – her distant cousin – like she's wooing a lover. "Think me not cruel," the vampire explains, "because I obey the irresistible law of my strength and weakness; if your dear heart is wounded, my wild heart bleeds with yours. In the rapture of my enormous humiliation I live in your warm life and you shall die – die, sweetly die – into mine." In the story's conclusion, Carmilla is killed by a stake through the heart and is then decapitated, conforming to one strand of folkloric tradition.

Thalaba the Destroyer (1801) by Robert Southey is the vampire's first appearance in English literature

Before Anne Rice's 1970s' gothic revival of the vampire, one of the 20th century's major texts in genre writing would be Richard Matheson's *I Am Legend* (1954). Far removed from creepy castles, vampire hunters and aristocratic villains,

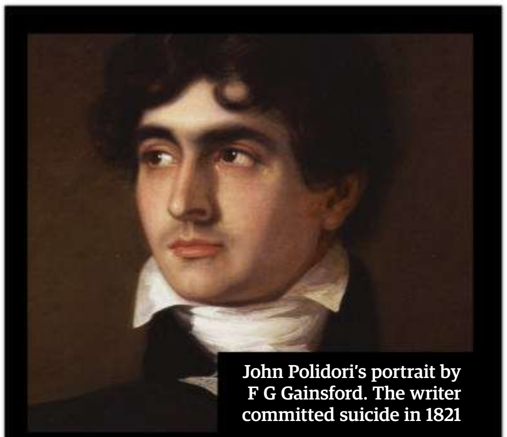
Baitala Deula Hindu temple in India showing depictions of creatures known as 'vetala' – blood-sucking hags

Matheson's short novel merged gothic sensibilities with post-nuclear apocalyptic fiction. Vampirism was, here, a plague unleashed upon humanity. The story's hero was an ordinary man named Robert Neville, who spends his days searching around Los Angeles for food and other provisions and attempting to understand the scientific reasoning for the existence of supernatural creatures. Neville spends his nights getting drunk and listening to music, doing so to drown out the calls and screams of the vampires who want to feast on his blood and turn him into one of them. The story's existentialist despair is extraordinary, and yet Matheson does draw upon traditional sexual themes associated with vampire literature to describe Neville's continued sexual impulses, and the allure of the female vampires who expose their sex to him, beckon him to unbolt the door and receive them. "The women, the lustful, bloodthirsty, naked women flaunting their hot bodies at him," Matheson writes about his character's conflicting emotional desires for sex and the torture of enforced celibacy.

Anne Rice's ground-breaking twist on vampire fiction was to give voice to the creature; exploring what it's like to live decadent and despised for hundreds of years. The agony, the boredom, the horror of existence and the damnation of eternal life. In other words, it's not much fun being immortal. Lestat is today as iconic as Count Dracula, representing once more the Satanic Lord version as the figure writers might well love the most. Stephenie Meyer's radical take on the vampire, too, in *The Twilight Saga*, gave us Edward Cullen, a teenaged undead who sparkles in sunlight, is talked into turning his girlfriend Bella Swan, and so straight and good, he's heroic. Elizabeth Kostova earned a million- dollar advance for her *Dracula* revision, *The Historian* (2005).

Today, there are hundreds of novels published about vampires and vampire-like creatures, exploring all sorts of scenarios and crafting all manner of revisions of the mythology. Though Western culture is obsessed with vampire literature, Congolese writer Sony Labou Tansi's *A Life and a Half* (1979) sees a revenant spirit lead a rebellion against a corrupt regime, while there are a host of African-American writers putting their own feminist spins on vampire fiction, with such novels as *My Soul to Keep* (1996) by Tananarive Due and L.A. Banks's *Vampire Huntress* series. The vampire – in literary form – looks, indeed, to be ever-living.

> "Today, there are hundreds of novels published about vampires and vampire-like creatures, exploring all sorts of scenarios and crafting all manner of revisions of the mythology"



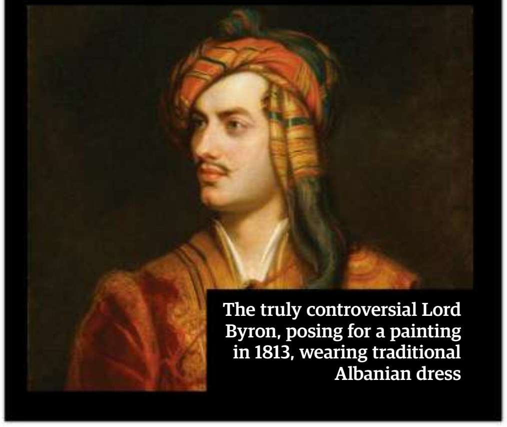
John Polidori's portrait by F G Gainsford. The writer committed suicide in 1821

John Polidori

The author of a seminal vampire tale met an untimely end, like many of his fellow romantic-era artists

Dr John Polidori (1895-1821) died in obscurity at the age of 25, yet his contribution to gothic horror is gigantic. His short-lived life touched upon infamy, when having gained his medical degree from the University of Edinburgh, he was assigned to be personal physician to scandalous Lord Byron.

The gallivanting pair spent the summer of 1816 abroad, in Switzerland, taking up residence at Villa Diodati by Lake Geneva. Byron hated his doctor and routinely belittled him with the nickname 'Polly Dolly'. But in this discord was sewn literary history. Polidori – having been sacked – went on to rework a discarded fragment by his detestable ex-employer and so exacted literary revenge in the creation of the 'aristocratic vampire' archetype. *The Vampyre* featured a bloodsucker explicitly modelled on Byron named Lord Ruthven. Published in 1819, the story was incorrectly attributed to the aristocrat once dubbed by a former lover as "mad, bad and dangerous to know."



The truly controversial Lord Byron, posing for a painting in 1813, wearing traditional Albanian dress

Vampires on screen

From louche aristocratic seducers to hideously deformed monsters, depictions of vampires and their hunters have been enthralling audiences and gamers alike for well over a century

Words by **Melanie Clegg**

For centuries, there has been an abundance of folklore tales about undead creatures preying on the living in order to suck their blood, whether they be hideous monsters who strike their victims dumb with terror or alluring seducers who use their charismatic charms to overpower their hapless conquests. Vampires had been a popular subject of penny dreadfuls long before Bram Stoker's *Dracula* was published in the late 19th century and then adapted into an enormously popular stage play, which mesmerised theatre goers all across the globe and created a compelling visual representation of the infamous Count Dracula and his sensuous, beautiful 'brides'. It set the tone for the majority of vampire films, television shows and games for over century.

Although the vampire genre is always, at heart, one based in horror, the imagery employed by directors and writers has more often than not overlapped with that of erotica and romance, with stills of vampires leaning over their pliant - usually female - victims being virtually interchangeable with those from more standard romantic films and shows, but with an added piquancy of danger and possible death. As with the original folklore, representations of vampires have given creators and audiences alike scope to explore our human preoccupations with sex and death, as well as more philosophical questions. After all, who hasn't watched a vampire film and wondered if drinking blood and effectively becoming a murderer would be a fair price to pay for immortality?

Whereas in the past, on-screen depictions of vampires were usually fairly frivolous and didn't delve too deeply into the vampire psyche, preferring instead to fixate on the more erotic and violent aspects of the genre, in recent years there has been a definite swing towards a more thoughtful and measured depiction of vampires, giving them back stories and agency, and exploring the crises that occur when they feel remorse for past actions or realise that immortality isn't actually all that wonderful. These trends have been mirrored in the game industry, which by its very nature has always been more preoccupied with the violent, horror aspects of the vampire genre, giving rise to darker, more complex and sophisticated storylines and emotionally involving games.

Perhaps one of the most fascinating aspects of the visual depiction of vampires is how universal the experience is for audiences all around the globe, for while most cultures have their own version of the bloodsucking undead mythology, the way that vampires are treated in films, television shows and games is generally pretty consistent. In the East, vampires are depicted in more or less the exact same way as they are in the West, and their films deal with the same themes: star-crossed lovers, the perils of high school, creepy aristocratic family and troubled vampire slayers.

This strikingly consistent approach to the way that vampires are portrayed in various visual medias around the world suggests that our depiction of vampires, which has certainly adapted over the years in accordance with changes in societal trends and behaviours - moving us away from the florid and often unpleasant melodrama of Hammer Films to the more subtle approach preferred today - says as much about us as it does about them, and forces us to consider not merely what it means to be a vampire but also what it means to be human.

Vampires on the silver screen

Although over a hundred years have gone by since the first ever vampire film was produced, they still remain just as popular as ever

When John Polidori's horror novel *The Vampyre* became a publishing sensation in 1819, it immediately captured the imagination of its readers and opened the floodgates for a whole wealth of vampire literature. This growing public taste for vampire fiction reflected a new hunger for the macabre, gothic and downright horrifying, with the most avid consumers of this literature, then as now, being women. The vampires of penny dreadfuls and more literary fiction were almost always suave, handsome and charismatic; outwardly perfect heroes whose charming exteriors hid their dangerous and predatory natures from their unsuspecting victims. It's not a coincidence that book covers and film posters featuring vampires frequently mirror those for more straightforward romances, with a broodingly handsome man leaning over a swooning and not entirely unwilling woman.

Little wonder, therefore, that when technology advanced and silent films began to gain popularity, vampires very quickly became a favourite both with film makers and their audiences, who lapped up the uniquely vampiric blend of glamour and horror. However, although the stars of vampire literature were male, the first true vampire to grace the silver screen in a full-length film was a veritable femme fatale, a beautiful blood drinker played by Alice Hollister in the 1913 film *The Vampire*, which was based on a poem by Rudyard Kipling. From the very start, the seductive, deadly dame was a favourite motif for early film makers, with the expression 'vamp', meaning an alluring but dangerous woman, quickly passing into common parlance. The ultimate vamp of the silent-film era was Theda Bara, who specialised in portraying hedonistic seductresses, heartless sirens and cruel sexual dominatrixes. Her 1915 film *A Fool There Was*, in which she is credited as 'The Vampire' is often cited as the first ever vampire film, despite the fact that on this occasion the vampiric activity is entirely metaphorical rather than literal - she plays a cruel and manipulative femme fatale whose exploitation of men sucks them dry emotionally and financially rather than physically.

A still from the 2004 action film *Van Helsing*, which pitted slayers and vampires against each other

Although seduction, sex and eroticism very quickly became an integral part of vampire lore, the best-known early silent film, *Nosferatu*, which was released in 1922, marked an unusual return to the grotesque horror of the original folklore tales with the sinister, repulsive vampire Count Orlok, obviously based on Stoker's Dracula. In fact, *Nosferatu* followed the plot of *Dracula* so closely that Stoker's estate was able to sue its makers and have all copies destroyed - but not before enough people had seen the film for it to leave a mark upon the vampire genre, not least by introducing the new concept that vampires could be killed by sunlight.

When *Interview with the Vampire* was originally optioned, John Travolta was the original choice to play Lestat

Nine years would pass before the first big-screen adaptation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, starring Béla Lugosi - who had played the role during a successful run of the stage version - as the eponymous vampire. Stoker's novel had already been adapted into a highly successful stage play and inspired two, now sadly lost, silent films, but it was Universal's iconic version that really turned Transylvania's most famous fictional resident into an international celebrity. Although Lugosi's *Dracula* is undoubtedly monstrous, he is also handsome, elegant and urbane. To this day, he remains, in the minds of many people, the archetypical and iconic vampire with his Hungarian accent, widow's peak, cape and natty, white bowtie. He is both mesmerising and seductive, and his victims appear to fall almost willingly into his arms, offering themselves up to him, their eyes closed in ecstasy as he goes in for the kill. This bold and thrilling conflation of sex and death, where one appeared to merge with the other, was enormously popular with audiences, and resulted in sequel *Dracula's Daughter* in 1936, which was followed by a whole series of other *Dracula* films, all delivering the same winning formula of charismatic undead count, swooning virgins and wild-eyed vampire hunters to delighted audiences all around the world. In an era when even romantic films were unable to feature anything more steamy than relatively chaste kissing, vampire films offered eroticism dressed up as horror, and so became popular with cinema goers looking for something a little more edgy.

A still from the 1931 *Dracula* film, which starred Béla Lugosi

It's noteworthy that very few vampire films were released during World War II - clearly film makers had decided that audiences were getting more than enough horror and excitement in their everyday lives and preferred instead to offer romance, inspiring costume dramas and heroic propaganda. Besides three sequels to Universal Studio's *Dracula*, *The Return of the Vampire* was released in 1943 and starred Béla Lugosi as the eponymous vampire, who was obviously closely modelled on his *Dracula* role, although for copyright reasons he was given another name for this particular outing. Although Lugosi is primarily associated with Dracula, he would actually only play the count twice, the second time being in the 1948 film *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein*, which was one of a slew of comedy horror films released during this time, reflecting a growing taste for skits and parodies, especially of horror. It was not until the late 1950s that the vampire genre was given a new spin when Hammer Films released its version of *Dracula* in 1958. Starring Christopher Lee and taking full advantage of the new technicolour technology and less restrictive moral codes of the era, it managed to evoke the brooding horror of the original book, while at the same time being so gruesome as to require editing before it could be released to the public. Like the earlier *Nosferatu*, it ended with the eponymous count dying as a result of exposure to sunlight, and unlike *Dracula* in the earlier Universal films, Christopher Lee's vampire has visible fangs. This new, more bloody version of *Dracula* proved so popular that it spawned no less than eight sequels between 1960 and 1974, six of which starred Lee as Dracula, while Peter Cushing reprised the role of his nemesis Van Helsing a further four times. The Hammer *Dracula* films may be fairly interchangeable and became increasingly preposterous with each new release, but they act as an interesting reflection of the subtle changes that were taking place in the film industry throughout the 1960s and 1970s. As the virgin brides of Dracula became increasingly scantily clad, the erotic subtext becomes more and more overt, and the violence becomes more bloody and extreme.

This increasingly lurid and violent trend at Hammer was reflected elsewhere in the film industry, as the eroticism that had so enthralled earlier viewers was frequently replaced by sadistic violence, gore, explicit sex and gratuitous nudity. There was also a significant increase in female vampires during this period, perhaps a reaction to the growth of the feminist movement and an increased interest in strong female protagonists.

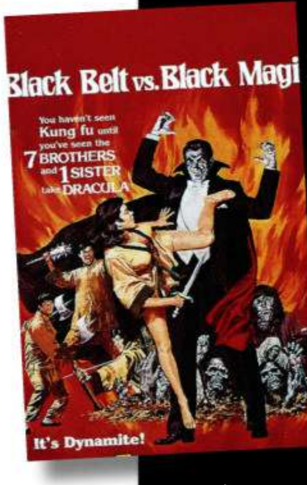
Films like Hammer's *Countess Dracula* (1971), *Daughters of Darkness* (1971) and *The Velvet Vampire* (1971) were all throwbacks to the old femme fatale trope of the earliest vampire films, while *The Vampire Lovers* (1970), *Lust for a Vampire* (1971), the infamous German film *Vampyros Lesbos* (1971) and *Vampyres* (1974) kickstarted a popular trend for vampire lesbian films.

However, by the end of the 1970s, trends began to change, and vampire films began to move away from tawdry gore-fests towards more sedate offerings, such as George A Romero's *Martin* (1978), *Salem's Lot* (1979) and Werner Herzog's 1979 remake of *Nosferatu*. Audiences had clearly had enough of blood-soaked orgies, screaming women and suave aristocratic vampires, and now seemed to prefer more realistic, thoughtful depictions of vampires, which often placed them in ordinary communities and perhaps highlighted the travails of concealing undead bloodsucking activities from neighbours and friends. It's no coincidence that the goth subculture also had its

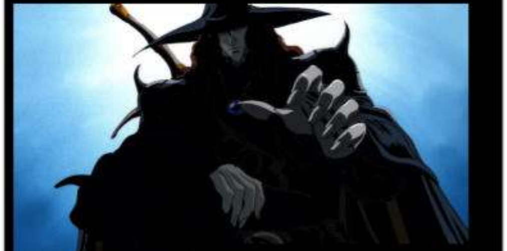
> Winona Ryder and Gary Oldman fell out during the filming of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and apparently disliked each other a lot

Vampire films in Japan

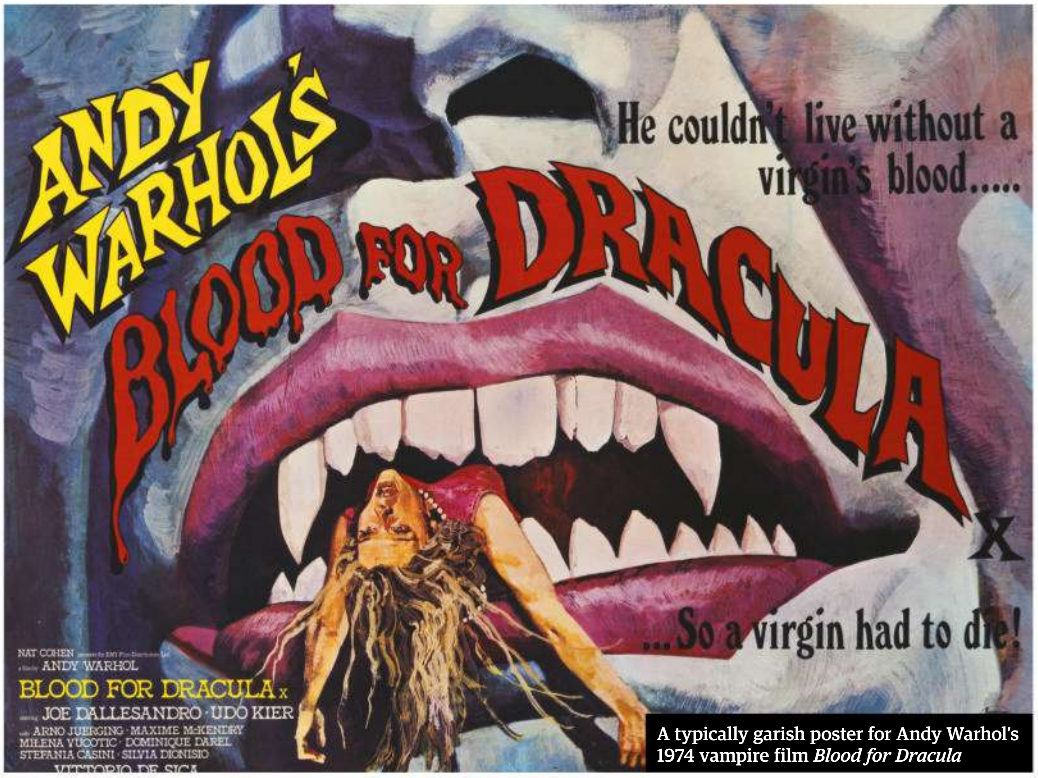
Vampire films have been loved by millions around the world but are particularly popular in Japan thanks to their potent mix of horror, eroticism and violence


Black Belt vs. Black Magi
You haven't seen Kung fu until you've seen the 7 BROTHERS and 1 SISTER take DRACULA
It's Dynamite!

Although vampires are predominantly the product of European folklore and myth, there's no denying the fact that they now have international appeal, with vampire films being enjoyed by audiences all around the world. Unlike many Asian countries, Japan has very few traditional tales about bloodsucking ghouls or restless undead spirits, but is perhaps one of the biggest consumers of vampire films, games and television shows. The 1974 Hammer film *The Legend of the 7 Golden Vampires*, which merges martial arts with *Dracula*, is perhaps a low point, but it can't be denied that Japan has produced some of the most innovative, visually stunning and interesting takes on vampire mythology with beautiful anime films like *Blood: The Last Vampire* (2000), *Vampire Hunter D* (1985) and stylish action movies like *Yakuza Apocalypse* (2015), really raising the bar when it comes to screen depictions of vampires.

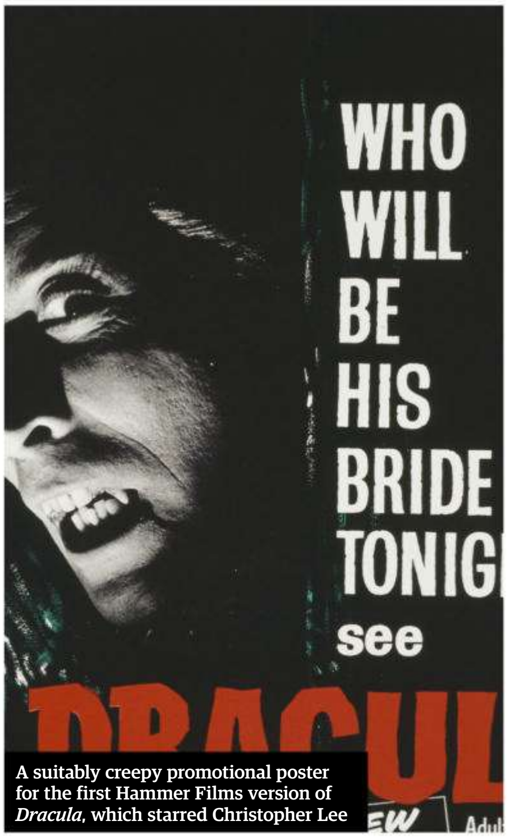


Vampire Hunter D **is one of the most successful Japanese vampire films**


ANDY WARHOL'S BLOOD FOR DRACULA
He couldn't live without a virgin's blood.....
...So a virgin had to die!
X
NAT COHEN
ANDY WARHOL
BLOOD FOR DRACULA X
JOE DALLESANDRO · UDO KIER
ARNO JUERGING · MAXIME McKENDRY
MILENA VUKOTIC · DOMINIQUE DAREL
STEFANIA CASINI · SILVIA DIONISIO
VITTORIO DE SICA

A typically garish poster for Andy Warhol's 1974 vampire film *Blood for Dracula*

A promotional shot for the 1970 Hammer film *The Vampire Lovers*, which tapped into a taste for lesbian vampires



A suitably creepy promotional poster for the first Hammer Films version of *Dracula*, which starred Christopher Lee

roots in this period, with its dark, vampiric clothing and make-up, and gloomy music. Although most goths were happy to just look like vampires – perhaps even donning fangs as part of the look – a small subsection went even further and experimented with blood drinking, emulating the vampires on screen, although obviously with far less dramatic results.

As goth, with all of its vampire connotations, increased in popularity across the globe during the 1980s, so too did the vampire genre flourish in the cinemas. Arty, sophisticated masterpieces like *The Hunger* (1983), which starred David Bowie and Catherine Deneuve as a pair of beautiful vampires preying on clubbers in New York, are a far cry from the excesses of Hammer's offerings, and set a new benchmark for horror in general and vampire films in particular, which would continue with the likes of Ken Russell's perplexing *The Lair of the White Worm* (1988) and Guillermo del Toro's surreal 1993 offering *Cronos*. At the other end of the spectrum there was *Fright Night* (1985), *Near Dark* (1987), the original film version of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1992) and *The Lost Boys* (1987), which tapped into the growing popularity of rock and goth music among the young, and kickstarted what would prove to be a lasting trend of marketing vampire films towards teenagers and young adults.

Although they had always had their fans, vampire films really hit their stride towards the end of the 20h century as they moved away from the lurid extravaganzas of Hammer, gained new fans and branched out into different genres, such as comedy, satire, fantasy and science fiction – the latter predominantly focusing on explanations for vampirism and origin stories, as well as dystopian horrors based on Richard Matheson's 1954 novel *I Am Legend*. However, despite the buzz around new interpretations of the vampire myth, old favourites like *Dracula* still reigned supreme, as evidenced by Francis Ford Coppola's 1992 film *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, which mingled Stoker's fictional tale of gothic woe with the actual history of Vlad III, a doomed reincarnation romance, lavish costumes and gallons of fake blood, which evoked contemporary concerns about HIV, AIDS and the potential dangers of contaminated blood. Vampire films have always reflected the preoccupations of their audiences, but perhaps never more so than in the 1980s and 1990s during the height

The 5 most influential vampire films

Although the vampire film genre has often been ridiculed and disregarded, some of the vampire films produced over the last century have been real game-changers

Nosferatu (1922)

Although nowadays we are more used to the concept of film vampires being charismatic, seductive charmers who hide the true horror of their predatory natures behind an attractive and impenetrable veneer, it cannot be denied that the genuinely terrifying Count Orlok of the 1922 film *Nosferatu* (played by German actor Max Schreck) is one of the best and most scary vampires ever to appear on the silver screen – even almost a century after the film was first made.

Dracula (1931)

There have been several silver-screen Draculas since the advent of vampire films, but there has been nothing quite like the original and best, played with charming yet sinister aplomb by Hungarian actor Béla Lugosi, who was reprising his turn as the bloodsucking count in a hugely successful play based on Bram Stoker's novel. Even after all these years, Lugosi's costume, which he was buried in, has remained an essential part of the Dracula role, and lives on in the legacy of the character.

Countess Dracula (1971)

The silent melodrama of *Nosferatu* and sinister elegance of Béla Lugosi became a distant memory during Hammer's heyday when a loosening of film certification restrictions and a general change in societal mores gave film makers free rein to indulge in blood-drenched orgies of explicit sex and violence. *Countess Dracula*, loosely based on the true history of Elizabeth Báthory, was one of the more successful, and remains one of the most popular of Hammer's films during this period.

of public paranoia about AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. The movie vampire, who is almost always depicted as extremely seductive and predatory as they prey upon their hapless victims, works as an obvious metaphor for the potential dangers of rampant sexuality and addiction in other films of the era like the 1995 Abel Ferrara film *The Addiction*.

This modern preoccupation with sex and death perhaps peaked with Neil Jordan's 1994 adaptation of *Interview with the Vampire*, the first book in Anne Rice's *The Vampire Chronicles*. Starring Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt, it is lushly melodramatic, flamboyant, grandiose in scale and a total game changer as it breathed new life into what was becoming a tired genre. Even Tarantino tried his hand at a vampire film with the 1996 relentlessly violent extravaganza *From Dusk till Dawn*, which drew heavily on older vampire films from the Hammer period for inspiration. Although the concept of vampire action films was not an entirely new one, from the mid 1990s onwards, there has been a definite lean towards this genre thanks to *Blade* (1998), *Van Helsing* (2004) and the *Underworld* series (2003-16), all of which pit vampires against their enemies, with predictably gruesome results. This high-octane approach, complete with pounding rock soundtracks, gothic backdrops and heavily choreographed violence would reach its zenith with *Queen of the Damned* (2002), a stylishly moody adaptation of another book from Anne Rice's *The Vampire Chronicles*.

However, while many vampire films were striding boldly into the new century, *Shadow of the Vampire* (2000) was looking back to the original 1922 version of *Nosferatu* with a quirky and often comical imagining of its filming, with Willem Dafoe playing a genuinely sinister Max Schreck, who happens to be a vampire in real life and has to be bribed not to murder the rest of the cast and crew. *Twilight* (2008), arguably the most successful vampire film of the decade, also looks back at older vampire tropes, which it merges with a thoroughly modern

The goth band Bauhaus are shown playing their best-known song *Béla Lugosi's Dead* during the opening credits of *The Hunger*

> "Interview with the Vampire revitalised a tired genre and influenced vampire films for decades to come"

The Hunger (1983)

Starring Catherine Deneuve and the celebrated David Bowie as a terrifying and icily beautiful yet ultimately dysfunctional vampire couple who have been together since the 18th century until they become involved with a mortal gerontologist played by Sarah Sarandon, *The Hunger* remains one of the most iconic vampire films of all time. This is largely thanks to the film's stylish direction, beautiful musical score and elegantly understated mood.

Interview with the Vampire (1994)

Based on Anne Rice's bestselling 1976 novel of the same name, which was the first instalment in a series of books about the French aristocratic vampire Lestat de Lioncourt and his cohorts, *Interview with the Vampire* revitalised a tired genre and influenced vampire films for decades to come thanks to its atmospheric direction by Neil Jordan and superb turns by both Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt.

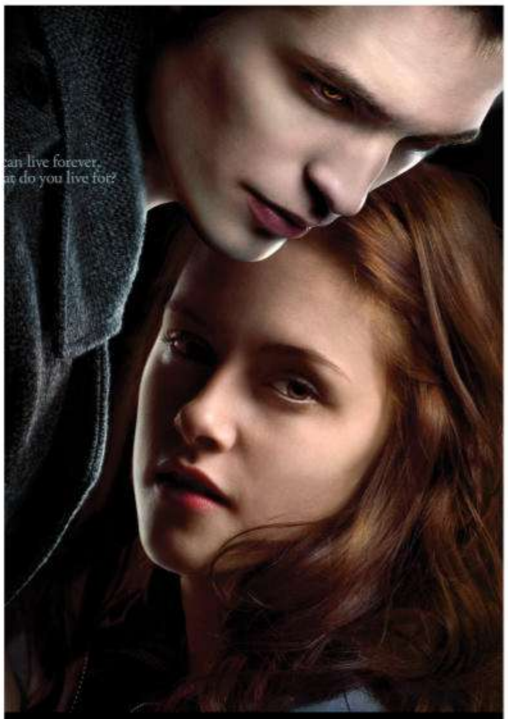
Gary Oldman and Winona Ryder as Dracula and Mina in *Bram Stoker's Dracula*

Bram Stoker's Dracula (1992)

Despite featuring one of the worst fake accents in film history, *Bram Stoker's Dracula* remains one of the greatest vampire films of all time

Although the original 1931 *Dracula* remains the king of the adaptations of Bram Stoker's novel, Francis Ford Coppola's version is by far the most visually lush and compelling recent interpretation of the well-known tale. Melodramatic, grandiose, gruesome, romantic, courageous, ambitious and endlessly entertaining, it has everything that any vampire fan could possibly wish for. It even, thanks to Coppola's masterful melding of Stoker's novel and the true history of Vlad the Impaler, manages to include a genuinely touching romantic attachment between Dracula, played to creepy yet charming perfection by Gary Oldman, and the beautiful Mina, played by Winona Ryder, who is the reincarnation of his long-dead and much-loved wife, Elisabeta, whose suicide triggers his original transformation into a vampire. Meanwhile, Anthony Hopkins plays a perfectly stalwart and dependable Van Helsing; Sadie Frost almost steals the show as Lucy Westenra, whose descent into vampirism manages to be horrifying, disturbingly erotic and profoundly affecting all at the same time; and Keanu Reeves, who was miscast as hapless lawyer Jonathan Harkness, delivers the worst attempt at an English accent in film history. It has its detractors thanks to its occasionally campishly over-the-top direction, and sometimes overly florid editing tricks, but Coppola's epic retelling of the hoary old tale and Gary Oldman's astonishing performance, which brings a new vulnerability to the sinister count thanks to his ultimately doomed love for Mina, has had a profound influence on films, television shows and games over the last three decades.

alternative music soundtrack, action sequences and slick production values. Based on Stephenie Meyer's best-selling novel about a romance between a mortal girl and her vampire boyfriend, which in turn draws on elements from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, it was unashamedly pitched at a teenage market and kickstarted a renewed interest in vampires among young adults. While teenagers were swooning over Edward Cullen, the handsome hero of *Twilight*, more sophisticated film lovers were catered to by the mesmerising *Byzantium* (2012) and *Only Lovers Left Alive* (2013), which stars Tilda Swinton and Tom Hiddleston as a married vampire couple who sate their need for blood by buying it rather than attacking the innocent. A year later, the Persian language *A Girl Walks Home Alone*, which was intriguingly billed as the 'first Iranian vampire Western', was a hit at art house cinemas across the globe, and even made it on to the bill at the prestigious Sundance Festival – a signal accolade that few vampire films over the past century could ever have hoped to achieve despite their continued popularity with audiences and critics alike.



Twilight was one of the most successful vampire films of all time, and kick started a new enthusiasm for the genre

An anime enthusiast cosplaying as a character from *Vampire Knight*

Vampires in Japanese anime

While vampires remain an integral part of the Western entertainment industry, they also have millions of fans in Asian countries – especially South Korea and Japan

While Western audiences prefer live-action vampire films and television shows, in Japan anime, a stylised form of cartoon that is not just for children, is the preferred medium. In many ways, anime and vampires are a perfect fit thanks to the quintessential anime style, which is visually stunning, youthful and packed full of energetic action sequences. There have been numerous anime treatments of vampires over the past few decades, most notably *Blood+* (2005-7), *Trinity Blood* (2001-5), *Blood Lad* (2009-16), *Vampire Knight* (2008-), *Hellsing* (2010-11) and *Rosario + Vampire* (2004-7), all of which have been hugely popular and feature standard vampire tropes such as battling vampire clans, high school love triangles and thwarting vampire plans for world domination. However, it's not all blood, doomed love and violence – *Nyanpire: The Gothic World of Nyanpire* (2011), about an abandoned kitten transformed into a vampire, provides adorable relief to all the hectic action sequences and drama of the more adult and serious titles.

Vampire Hunter D is one of the most successful Japanese vampire films

Vampires on the small screen

Ever since private ownership of televisions was kickstarted in the mid 1950s, vampires have been an integral part of our hometime viewing habits

While vampire films have been around and thrilling audiences for over a century, television shows featuring our favourite bloodsucking creatures of the night have been a relatively more recent affair thanks to the fact that it wasn't until the 1950s that televisions began to be found in private homes – and even then there was a very slow roll out until almost everyone had one.

However, although they had some catching up to do, it's clear that vampire television shows are now very much a force to be reckoned with, and in some cases are even more popular and iconic than most vampire films, not least because they have the freedom to explore all the various aspects of vampire mythology, philosophy and every-day existence in great detail. As the history of vampire films shows, audiences have always been fascinated by the minutiae of vampire life, so series that take an in-depth look at what it really means to be a vampire are pretty much guaranteed to be winners. That's not to say that audiences aren't also keen to see a lot of the lush decadence, glamour and sexiness that has made films like *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, *Interview with the Vampire* and *Byzantium* so successful though, and while a lot of vampire shows are unashamedly gritty when dealing with the realities of vampire life, others also revel in the more glamorous side.

The first regular television depiction of vampires was the American comedy series *The Munsters*, which ran between 1964 and 1966, and was closely modelled on *The Addams Family*, who although undeniably spooky are not actually vampiric in nature. Although the main character, Hermann Munster, is not a vampire, his wife, Lily, and other family members clearly are, and their vampiric behaviour, which is modelled on the archly aloof character of Béla Lugosi rather than the florid horrors of Hammer films, adds to the comedy as they deal with the challenge of adapting their vampiric tendencies and clearly gothic appearance in order to fit in with everyday American suburban life – with predictably amusing results. This theme was once again picked up in the hugely popular and successful gothic soap opera *Dark Shadows*, which captivated American audiences for almost five years between 1965 and 1971, and generated an astonishing 1,225 half-hour-long episodes during its run – quite an achievement considering the fact that it was deemed pretty dull and was on the brink of cancellation before the writers introduced a vampire character, Barnabas Collins (played by Canadian actor Jonathan Frid), at which point it became a tremendous hit. Melodramatic, often ridiculous and occasionally unintentionally hilarious, *Dark Shadows* still exerts an enormous influence today, and certainly had a profound effect on the tastes of its audience, who now became far more receptive to more supernatural, dark and atmospheric television shows. Dan Curtis, the producer of *Dark Shadows*, returned to vampires in 1972 with his one-off television movie *The Night Stalker*, an edgy production that followed journalist Carl Kolchak's attempts to solve a mysterious series of brutal murders in Las Vegas, which places him on the track of a bloodthirsty vampire, Janos Skorzeny. It proved so popular that it was followed up with another movie and a whole series, which quickly flopped but would later inspire *The X Files* in both format and subject matter, in which Kolchak investigates other supernatural crimes, including more vampirism.

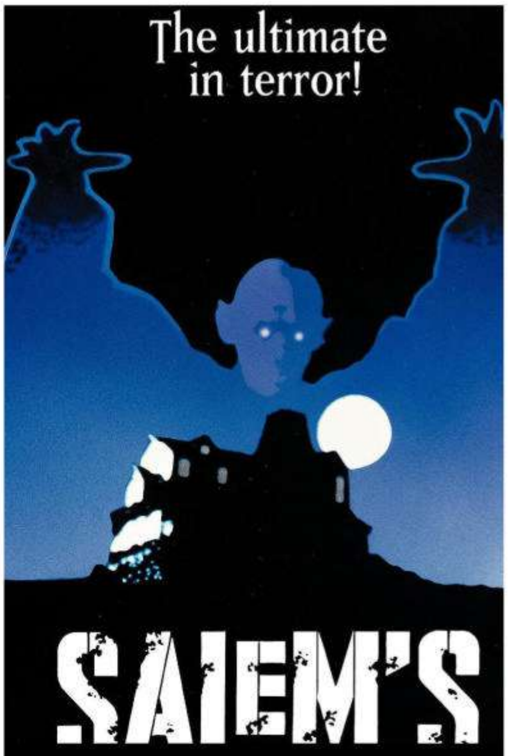
This linking of vampires and crime, which hasn't been tackled very often in films, would become a reoccurring feature of vampire television shows in which they are often either revealed to be the perpetrator of particularly hideous murders or, in some cases, are themselves detectives, using their unique vampiric gifts, such as extra sensory vision or hearing, shape-shifting, immortality, mind reading and hypnotism to help solve crimes.

As private television ownership expanded rapidly in the 1970s, many people's first experience of vampires on the small screen would have been the 1979 adaptation of Stephen King's novel *Salem's Lot*, which was based on *Dracula* and marked a rare return to the earlier concept, used to terrifying effect in *Nosferatu*, of vampires as being hideous, charmless, silent monsters rather than the externally sophisticated and cultured aristocrats of *Dark Shadows*, *Dracula* and *The*

Buffy the Vampire Slayer is the first television show to feature a character being told to 'Google it'

"*Dark Shadows* captivated American audiences for almost five years between 1965 and 1971"

"This linking of vampires and crime, which hasn't been tackled very often in films, would become a reoccurring feature"



A promotional poster for the 1979 adaptation of Stephen King's *Salem's Lot*

A still from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, showing the excellent Sarah Michelle Gellar as the fearless demon killer Buffy Summers

SESAME STREE

Based on Béla Lugosi's Dracula, Count von Count is undoubtedly one of the most popular vampires on television

From the Count to Vampirina

While adults and teenagers are still the biggest consumers of vampire shows, some of the genre's biggest fans are much younger

While vampire television shows have predominately been of a much more adult nature thanks to the genre's inherent preoccupations with sex and death, there's no denying the fact that some of the most iconic and easily recognisable vampire characters come not from the likes of Hammer Films or the latest teen vampire show, but from the world of children's television. Perhaps this shouldn't really be so surprising though – children love to be scared, albeit at a more sedate level than their parents. The gothic high drama, heavy accents, pomposity and histrionics of the vampire genre has always left it open for satire, and this too has made it appealing to children, who were among the most avid viewers of harmless early shows like *The Munsters*. For many of us, Count von Count in *Sesame Street*, who made his first appearance in 1972, was the first vampire we had ever seen on screen. Modelled on Béla Lugosi's Dracula with a thick Romanian accent, evil 'mwahaha' laugh, and creepy, cobweb-covered castle, he was initially much scarier (relatively speaking) before they toned it down to make him more friendly. Also modelled on Lugosi's Dracula was the British cartoon *Count Duckula* (1988-93), which starred a vegetarian vampire duck who feasted on ketchup rather than blood, and owned a teleporting castle. Even Disney has got in on the act with the cute and quirky 2017 show *Vampirina*, which is aimed at young children and revolves around a young vampire girl who has moved from Transylvania to Pennsylvania with her parents.

A still from the popular show *The Vampire Diaries*

Hunger. Although existing film and television productions had included the idea that, in the right circumstances, vampires are capable of spawning new undead bloodsuckers, the concept of vampires as a contagious swarm taking over a small American town, as in *Salem's Lot*, was a new one, and tapped into a contemporary taste for epidemic and disaster films. Although it hasn't aged particularly well, *Salem's Lot* still remains satisfyingly spooky – mainly thanks to the fact that even in the late-1970s, television shows were much more restricted than their big-screen counterparts when it came to the depiction of sex and violence, and so were forced to use more suggestive means to convey atmosphere – which are still more effective today. Many of the concepts employed in *Salem's Lot* would be returned to much later on in the extremely popular cult series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, which ran for seven seasons between 1997 and 2003, and featured hideous swarms of relatively mindless local American vampires, who tended to attack in groups and were easy to overcome, as well as the more classic intelligent lone bloodsuckers, most of whom had European origins and were much harder to defeat. Like *Salem's Lot*, the original *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* film and the popular teen vampire

The 5 most influential vampire shows

Vampires perhaps entered the mainstream even more through television shows and series with these evocative and sensual television series

Dark Shadows

Although it has not aged especially well, there's no denying that the often ridiculously melodramatic gothic soap opera *Dark Shadows* still exerts the greatest influence over depictions of vampires in all medias – thanks to a compelling performance by Jonathan Frid, who plays the vampiric anti-hero Barnabas Collins, who returns from the dead to live with his dysfunctional descendants in Collinswood, Maine.

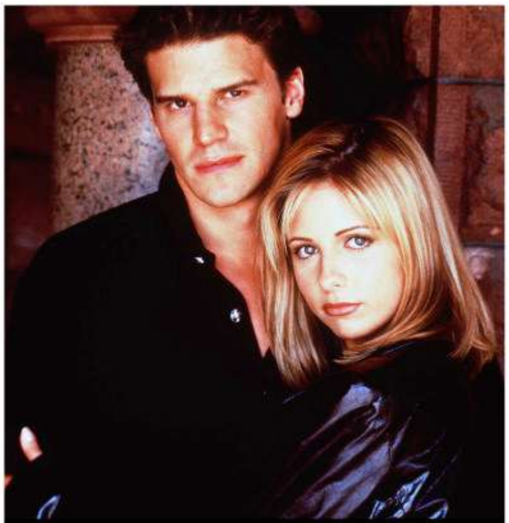
The Night Stalker

Creepy, enthralling and, at times, still genuinely quite scary, the TV show *The Night Stalker* is a standalone television drama that spawned a whole series, and would ultimately act as the chief influence for one of the greatest supernatural series of all time: *The X Files*. Its main premise, the murder of Las Vegas prostitutes, isn't all that original in the grand scheme of things, but the way that it was handled remains way ahead of its time.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer

The undisputed queen of the vampire genre, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* will doubtless continue to exert a powerful influence over writers and directors for generations to come. Designed to spin the tired vampire trope on its head, as evidenced by its theme music, which kicks off with a classic gothic organ intro before heading in a totally different direction, it delighted audiences with compelling story arcs, humour, romance and plenty of vampire-slaying action.

> "Although it hasn't aged particularly well, *Salem's Lot* still remains satisfyingly spooky"



Buffy's vampire boyfriend Angel, played by David Boreanaz, proved so popular with fans that he ended up with his own show

film *The Lost Boys*, the series is placed firmly in small town America, in this case the fictional Californian town of Sunnydale, located above a literal Hellmouth, which results in the town being overrun by vampires, demons and other unsavoury supernatural creatures, which the heroine has to fight and vanquish.

The show's writer, Joss Whedon, made it clear that *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* was not just turning the usual horror tropes on their head by making the diminutive blonde heroine a slayer rather than a passive victim, but also drawing on the older traditions of vampire films and television shows by using human interactions with the undead as metaphors for the characters' other concerns about adolescence and personal relationships - most literally in the season one concept that 'high school is hell' regardless of whether it is literally positioned over the Hellmouth or not.

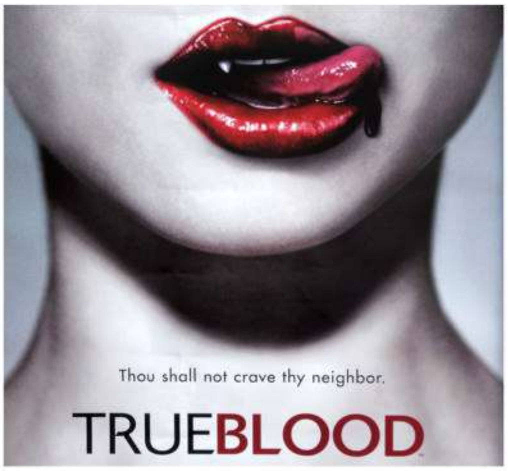
Elements of sex and death also come to play, particularly when Buffy loses her virginity to her vampire boyfriend, Angel, played with brooding aplomb by David Boreanaz, who had previously regained his soul thanks to a gypsy curse. The sexual act causes him to lose his soul again and revert back to his original evil vampiric state, which prompts Buffy to ruefully comment: "That's the ultimate metaphor. You sleep with a guy and he turns bad on you." While Buffy remained behind to battle the forces of evil in Sunnydale, Angel went off to Los Angeles to battle demonic and human crime in his own spin-off show *Angel*, which ran for five years between 1999 and 2004. *Angel* is a much darker and moodier show than *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, reflecting the eponymous hero's constant struggles with his demonic nature and ongoing battle to come to terms with the terrible guilt and remorse that he feels about the appalling things that he did before he regained his soul. For Angel, life as a vampire with a soul is one of endless and ultimately futile contrition for his past actions and fear that he might one day lose his soul and become evil once again - a fry cry from the majority of screen vampires, who revel in their immortal state and appear to feel no remorse about their behaviour, regarding their victims as necessary collateral damage.

> *Blood Ties* (2007-8) features a character, Henry Fitzroy, who is based on Henry VIII's illegitimate son by Elizabeth Blount

Perhaps Angel would have been happier in the world inhabited by the characters of *True Blood* (2008-14), a complex and violent southern gothic vampire show based on a series of books by Charlaine Harris. Once again, the setting is a small American town, this time the fictional Bon Temps in Louisiana, and the heroine is yet again an attractive blonde with special powers, but while Buffy is aimed squarely at teenagers and young adults, not least because of its original high-school setting, *True Blood* is an altogether more grown-up tale. While the vampires of Sunnydale are forced to live underground, emerging only at night, *True Blood* starts two years after Japanese scientists have created Tru Blood, a synthetic blood product with all the qualities of the real thing, which means that vampires can finally stop preying on the innocent and emerge from the shadows.

While *True Blood* contains many of the same themes as other vampire tales, its exploration of the consequences of open vampirism is innovative and new, and takes viewers into an even deeper exploration of the vampire psyche. One of the most interesting aspects of *True Blood* is the way that the existence of Tru Blood divides the vampires and mortals into distinct camps - those who believe that the vampires, a hitherto misunderstood and marginalised group, should be given equal rights and accepted into the general population, and those who believe this to be impossible, either because they believe in vampire superiority or think that

> "The domestic arrangements and everyday life of vampires has always fascinated viewers"



Thou shall not crave thy neighbor.
TRUEBLOOD

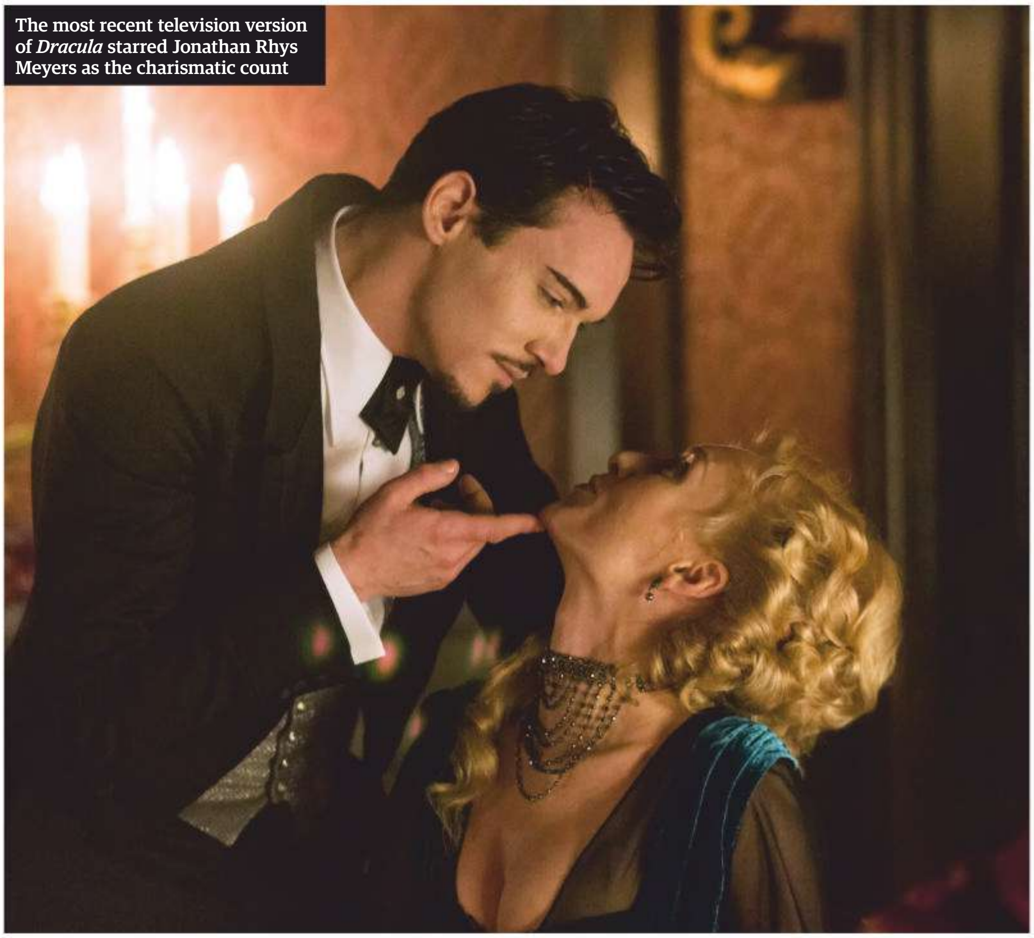
True Blood

Based on a series of bestselling novels, *True Blood* was one of the biggest television hits of the last decade thanks to the chemistry between its leads, engrossing story lines, amazing world building and seriously sizzling sexuality of its characters. Not to mention the fact that the concept of vampires 'coming out of the coffin' and seeking equal rights with humans can't fail to resonate strongly in the current social climate.

Being Human

The domestic arrangements and everyday life of vampires has always fascinated viewers – we love to see vampires sleeping in their coffins, raiding the fridge for blood bags or evading sunlight when going to the shops. *Being Human* covers all of this, while at the same time delivering an often humorous look at the difficulties that come with trying to pass as human when you are anything but. It's a fun spin on a very popular genre.

The domestic setting of *Being Human* is a far cry from the grandeur of most other vampire films and shows



The most recent television version of *Dracula* starred Jonathan Rhys Meyers as the charismatic count

they have forfeited their rights thanks to centuries of violence and murder.

The British show *Being Human*, which originally aired in the same year as *True Blood*, explores similar themes through its main vampire character, Mitchell, played by Aidan Turner. Set in Bristol, the premise of *Being Human* involves a vampire, a werewolf and a ghost sharing a house and trying their best to fit in with the normal human world, despite pressures from their own kind to conform. Repulsed by his own vampire urges, Mitchell tries his best to abstain from drinking human blood, with his efforts being presented as akin to a drug addict trying to go cold turkey – only to lapse with predictably horrific results. Although the idea of vampires having a conscience is not new, the struggles of Angel, Mitchell, the newly liberated vampires of *True Blood* and (more recently) Cassidy in the series *Preacher* to come to terms with the dark side of their natures and make amends for their past behaviour is certainly novel and typical of an era when many people are engaged in an endless quest for self improvement, which typically involves making peace with past mistakes.

Thanks to *Twilight*, the teen vampire trope of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* was reimagined for new audiences with *The Vampire Diaries*, which ran for eight seasons between 2009 and 2017. Containing all the usual familiar vampire tropes such as love triangles, a small town setting and complicated vampire hierarchies, it repackaged them into a compelling gothic drama that was enormously popular with fans, and spawned a renewed interest in the vampire genre. Also hugely successful was *Penny Dreadful* (2014-16), which took the vampire genre back to its Victorian origins. Dark, moody, twisted and sensual, *Penny Dreadful* intertwined vampires (including Dracula and other characters from Bram Stoker's original novel), Dorian Gray, Frankenstein, witches and other supernatural and occult elements of Victorian society and literature. It is unashamedly gothic, visually stunning and lushly romantic in a way that is intended to bring to mind *Bram Stoker's Dracula* and *Interview with the Vampire* rather than the teenage angst and Asian action sequences that have become increasingly common in vampire films and television shows.

The 2013 version of *Dracula*, which starred Jonathan Rhys Meyers as the eponymous count,

> "Dark, moody, twisted and sensual, Penny Dreadful intertwined vampires, Dorian Gray, Frankenstein and witches"

was intended to capitalise on this return to the dark decadence of earlier vampire films but sadly flopped, partially because it lacked the complexity and dark sparkle of *Penny Dreadful*.

After well over half a century of fluctuating fortunes, vampires certainly seem to be enjoying a period of unprecedented popularity, with new shows appearing all the time, while vampire storylines consistently appear in episodes of popular programmes like *Doctor Who*, *Supernatural* and *American Horror Story*. It's also boosted by recent crossovers with the film industry, such as series based on the popular cult films *From Dusk till Dawn*, *Blade*, *Let the Right One In* and *What We Do in the Shadows* and, less successfully, a 2012 film version of the series *Dark Shadows*. It definitely looks like the vampire genre is very much here to stay, and as the world changes it will be interesting to see how our depictions of vampires – which to date have been heavily influenced by our own human preoccupations and concerns with mortality, sex and death – change along with it.

Sarah Palin was offered the opportunity to appear in *True Blood*, but she turned it down

Vampires in games

As vampires gradually filtered out into popular culture via films and television shows, it was inevitable that they would gradually begin to populate the new gaming technology

In many ways, the game industry, with its continued focus on grandiose world building, fantasy, fast-paced action sequences and monsters is the perfect fit for vampires, and if anything it's surprising that we don't have more vampire games, although there's certainly been a constant stream of releases since computer games first became popular in the 1970s. However, although there is the odd occasional foray into the less violent and more philosophical or societal aspects of vampire lore, the emphasis in games has almost always been on the more violent elements, such as evading slayers, fighting different clans or seeking world domination and the overthrow of human society. Whereas we have become accustomed to more thoughtful and even domestic depictions of vampires in films and television, it's clear that the world of gaming has entirely different preoccupations as well as a different audience.

However, although the content and audience often varies, the first game to involve vampires was, perhaps unsurprisingly, based on Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. *The Count*, which was released in 1981, was a text based adventure game designed for home computers. A far cry from today's immensely sophisticated and complex games, it was incredibly basic and involved playing a character who has to solve puzzles in order to find their way around Dracula's castle and eventually battle and beat the count himself. It was hardly thrilling stuff, but nonetheless paved the way for similarly uncomplicated platform games, such as *Ghost House* (1986) and *Night Hunter* (1989), which were simple in design and not especially difficult to play. Luckily for more discerning gamers, the *Castlevania* game series launched in Japan in 1986 and provided a much more satisfying experience – although early *Castlevania* games were still side-scrolling and very different to the far more sophisticated latest instalments to the long-running and extraordinarily prolific franchise, which was taken over by Nintendo in the late-Eighties. Although the game play and graphics have become increasingly slick over the

A life-size statue of a main character from the *Castlevania* game and television show franchise

The Toreador was the most bohemian and artistic vampire clan in *Vampire: The Masquerade*

The immortal clans of Vampire: The Masquerade

For some die-hard fans of *Vampire: The Masquerade*, picking which side you were on could be one of the most important decisions of your life

When the tabletop game *Vampire: The Masquerade* was first released in 1991, it was unsurprisingly hugely popular with geeks and goths alike, not least because of the many vampire clans that players could align themselves with as part of the role play. Indeed, some people took the clan aspect very seriously indeed and considered themselves part of the clan even in real life. Luckily, the clans were so disparate that there was one for seemingly everyone, whether you felt akin to the aristocratic Ventrue, the creepy Lasombra, the animalistic Gangrel or more like a wild and crazy Malkavian. There was also the ninja assassins, the Assamite and the thuggish, violent Brujah as well as the bohemian Toreador and the gypsy vagabond Ravnos. If you fancied yourself as a bit of a mobster then there was the Giovanni clan, while the Nosferatu clan was simply monstrous in both looks and deed. Other options were the elite Tremere, the evil Lasombra and Tzimisce and the Egyptian god worshipping Followers of Set.

Perhaps the most popular *Masquerade* vampire clan was the aristocratic and aloof Ventrue

Vampire Night (PlayStation 2, 2001)

Although vampire games haven't always been very well received by players, *Vampire Night* was a rare but happy success

Initially released as an arcade game in 2000, the Namco game *Vampire Night* was ported on to the PlayStation 2 a year later in November 2001 along with a special light gun that would enable players to feel more involved with the game. Vampire games have not always been of the best quality, but *Vampire Night* definitely provided the tired genre with an extra boost thanks to a winning mixture of decent action and an engrossing storyline with characters that players could actually care about. Set in an alternate reality, the gameplay takes place in a contemporary France, which has failed to progress forward since the 19th century, and so is still very rustic. The main protagonists are a pair of vampire-hunting brothers, Albert and Michel, who represent the forces of good in an ongoing war against the evil vampires. In common with other games of its type, it is soon revealed that the brothers' own supernatural strength and agility is of course due to the fact that they themselves are, in fact, half vampire, having been deliberately created by their nemesis, the immortal vampire overlord Count Auguste in order to kill him – only for him to abruptly change his mind at the very last minute. Aided by a traumatised young French girl, Caroline, the game involves the brothers fighting against Count Auguste's henchmen (and women) until they are able to confront and kill the chief vampire himself – before selflessly ending their own lives as well.

PlayStation 2
Vampire Night

Vampire Night has its flaws, but is justifiably hailed as one of the best vampire games ever made, with legions of fans

last two decades, the basic premise of *Castlevania* has remained the same – players take the role of a member of the ancient Belmont family, a clan of slayers who have devoted their lives to battling against Dracula and his evil cohorts, who are mostly other supernatural creatures like werewolves, Medusa, Frankenstein's monster and a cursed mummy. Like *Assassins' Creed*, each *Castlevania* game is set in a different era thanks to Dracula being resurrected once a century, which gives each instalment of the franchise its own distinct flavour, although some elements, such as a special vampire-killing magical whip employed by the Belmont clan remain constant.

As the gothic subculture gained popularity in the early 1990s and brought with it an increased appreciation for the original Victorian art and literature that had inspired Bram Stoker to write *Dracula*, there was a renewed flurry of interest in tabletop role-playing games like *Dungeons*, which inevitably led to the creation of Vampire: The Masquerade. Launched in 1991 by White Wolf Publishing, it was hugely successful and set a new benchmark for role-playing games thanks to the dark complexity of the fictional, vampire-inhabited world that it attempted to evoke. A video version of the game, titled *Vampire: The Masquerade – Redemption*, was released in 2000, followed by a sequel, *Vampire: The Masquerade – Bloodlines* in 2004. The main protagonist of both games is a newly fledged vampire who must find their feet and also complete a quest that takes them into a dark and dangerous underground world inhabited by seven different vampire clans, all with different characteristic and allegiances. Some fans became so devoted to the *Vampire Masquerade* games that they considered themselves to belong to specific clans – in much the same way that some hardcore *Harry Potter* fans today become strongly attached to certain Hogwarts' houses. This sense of belonging to a particular group made the game even more appealing to members of the gothic subculture, which ensured its popularity for decades to come.

The title credits of *Castlevania* are full of names that are obvious homages to old vampire films such as Christopher Bee and Vran Stoker

Thanks to the release of the Sony PlayStation in the 1990s, followed by various other more sophisticated consoles, such as the Nintendo GameCube and Microsoft Xbox, games quickly became more complex and increasingly advanced, which meant that vampire games quickly moved away from the dull side-scrolling games of the 1980s and became much more complex.

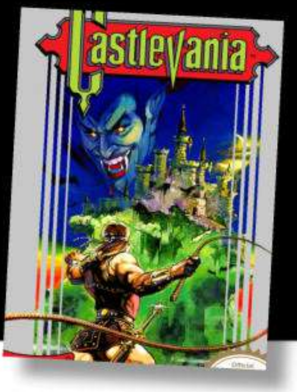
"Although early vampire games had been relatively lacklustre, they improved at the start of the 21st century, prompted by a renewed interest in the genre"

5 games that changed the vampire genre

Although the vampire game genre has had a chequered history, some releases have rightly achieved iconic status with gaming fans

Castlevania

Although the first instalment of the long-running *Castlevania* franchise was a rather lacklustre side scrolling game, it has come on in leaps and bounds since then, becoming darker and more complex with each release, and even spawning graphic novels, toys, collectors' cards and a popular anime television series, although plans for a film have been temporarily shelved.

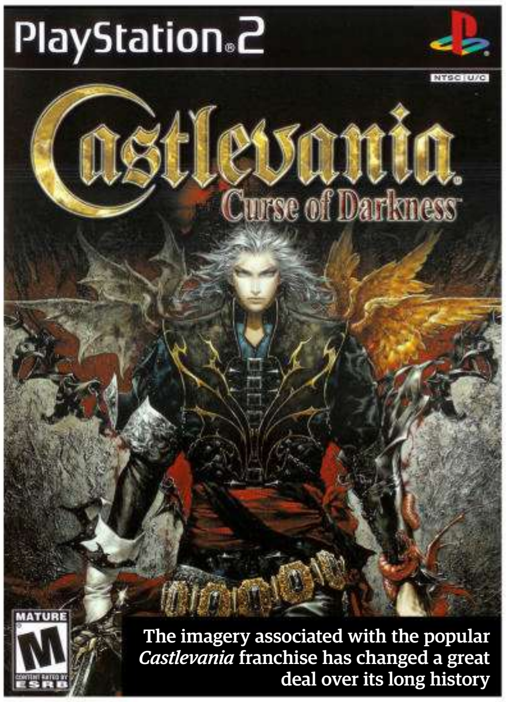


Vampire: The Masquerade

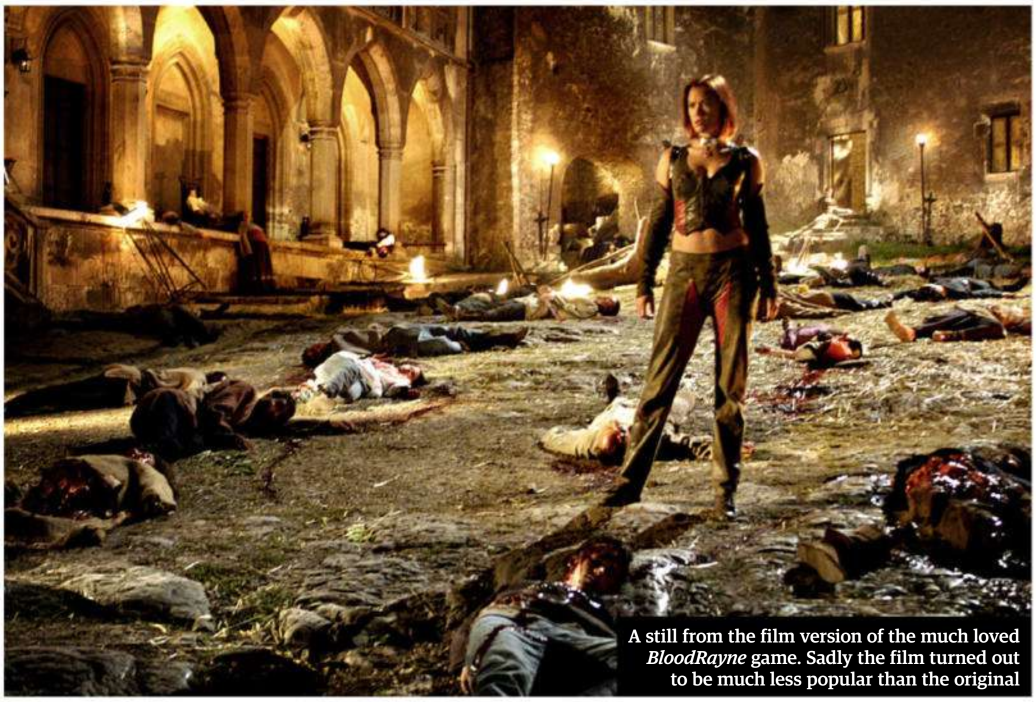
Tremendously popular with gothic subcultures, geeks and average enthusiast gamers alike, the table top version of *Vampire: The Masquerade* broke new ground when it was first released back in 1991. Charting the struggles of lowly members, known as 'kindred', of a variety of different vampire clans, it would spawn two spin-off video games, various books and even a short-lived television series.

Nosferatu: The Wrath of Malachi

Violent, gory, often rather terrifying and extremely entertaining, the survival first person game *Nosferatu: The Wrath of Malachi* fits more into the gruesome shoot 'em up tradition of *Resident Evil* than the glamorous world of the *Masquerade*. Players are given 90 tense minutes to search a randomly generated castle and rescue members of the kidnapped Patterson family from the clutches of the evil *Nosferatu*-like vampire Lord Malachi, whose strength increases every time someone is killed.



The imagery associated with the popular *Castlevania* franchise has changed a great deal over its long history



A still from the film version of the much loved *BloodRayne* game. Sadly the film turned out to be much less popular than the original

An early popular game was *Legacy of Kain,* which was released in 1996 for the PlayStation but soon became available for other platforms. Like *Vampire: The Masquerade, Legacy of Kain* and its follow-up games involved playing as a newly created vampire protagonist, in this instance Kain who inhabits the fantasy realm of Nosgoth and is seeking a cure for his vampirism, which naturally involves a lot of bloodshed along the way. Also popular on the new consoles were spin-off games from popular films, which worked best with action films like *Blade* and *Van Helsing* rather than the likes of *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, which inspired a rather dull side-scrolling platform game in 1993, in which players took the role of Jonathan Harker in order to gather equipment and fight various different bosses before facing Dracula himself. No wonder that the 8-bit version was voted number 21 in a list of the worst video games of all time according to *FLUX* magazine.

Although early vampire games had been relatively lacklustre, they definitely improved at the start of the 21st century, prompted no doubt by a renewed interest in the genre as a whole, especially among young adults, who are the biggest consumers of computer games. Among the most popular of the new breed of games was *BloodRayne* (2002), which is set in pre-war America, Argentina and Germany and involves the eponymous Rayne, who is half vampire herself, battling vampires on behalf of the mysterious Brimstone Society. It was so successful that it inspired a film, which completely bombed and in 2009 was put at ninth place in a *Time* list of the top-ten worst video game movies ever made.

BloodRayne, the film, made $3.7 million from a $25-million budget and was nominated for six Raspberry Awards including Worst Picture

Over the last two decades, the trend for violent rather than thoughtful vampire video games has continued thanks largely to the release of such games as *Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse* (2001), *Vampire Rain* (2007) and *Infamous: Festival of Blood* (2012), as well as the moody 'weird west' style game *Darkwatch*, which was released on PlayStation 2 in 2005, the stealth combat game *Dark*, which came out in 2013 and the much hyped *Vampyr*, which was released in June 2018.

As we have seen, the vampire genre has had its ups and downs over the years, but while vampire films and television shows have been revitalised over the last two decades with bold, innovative and exciting material being released on a regular basis, it seems as though the video game side of the vampire genre has slowed and stagnated, no doubt because of the emphasis on the violent, bloody side of vampire lore, which as we have seen is probably the least interesting thing about it. Things could easily change though, and perhaps in the future we'll begin to see much more creative and thought-provoking releases that properly explore just how fascinating vampires actually are.

"It follows the adventures of outlaw gunslinger and vampire Jericho Cross who has been recruited to hunt other monsters"

BloodRayne

The ambitious hack and slash game *BloodRayne* follows the struggles of a dhampir, half vampire, Rayne as she searches for her evil vampire-father Kagan and does the bidding of the mysterious Brimstone Society. It was well received by gamers and critics alike and spawned two more games, *Bloodrayne 2* and *BloodRayne: Betrayal*, as well as an action film, which is now best forgotten.

KRISTANNA LOKEN
MICHELLE RODRIGUEZ
MICHAEL MADSEN
and BEN KINGSLEY
BLOODRAYN

Darkwatch: Curse of the West

With so many games following the usual vampire tropes, the dark and complex 2005 shooter game *Darkwatch: Curse of the West* feels like a refreshing change as it mixes horror with steampunk and Western themes and imagery to create something new and even occasionally beautiful as it follows the adventures of outlaw gunslinger and vampire Jericho Cross who has been recruited to hunt other monsters. Sadly, despite its popularity, the planned sequel and film failed to materialise.

DARKWATCH
M
HIGH MOON
CAPCOM

The secret lives of vampires

They may live in the shadows, but the vampire community continues to thrive. It's not all sucking blood and hiding from the sunlight

Words by **Poppy-Jay Palmer**

Nowadays, past the times of Vlad the Impaler and Grigori Rasputin, when vampires hit the headlines it's usually in relation to movie announcements and box office figures. However, in our modern society vampires still exist, sometimes proudly and publicly, sometimes in the shadows. The contemporary vampire community is vast and ever-expanding, with members ranging from appreciators to blood-drinking, self-proclaimed 'real' vampires.

Originally stemming from the goth subculture of alternative lifestyles, the vampire community has a number of subcultures within it too. One of the most prominent, and mainstream, is what people playfully refer to as fangdom, and it's just as it sounds: people from the fangdom community are the ones you would likely find roaming the floor at Comic-Con. A diverse group of people, fangdom brings together anyone and everyone with a deep love of vampire fiction, with specific interests in pop-culture hits like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *The Twilight Saga*, *The Vampire Diaries* and the works of Charlaine Harris and Anne Rice.

Fangdom then naturally branches out to other pop-culture-related groups, like scholars that specialise in modern vampire culture and vampire mythology, and role-players that partake in vampire-related live-action role-play, or LARP, usually in relation to one of the most famous fanged LARP games, Vampire: The Masquerade. A gothic-punk tabletop game that was first released by White Wolf Publishing in 1991, it explores gothic themes like mortality, salvation, depravity and the human condition (or indeed the absence of the human condition), while adding an element of strategy and competition. The game is basically Dungeons and Dragons but for vampire fans. Players create characters to play as - vampires pretending to be human - while a storyteller controls the game. Though it's technically a tabletop game, players do sometimes act and dress as their characters, meeting in hotels, clubs and fan conventions. But it's all just role-playing - something that cannot be said of other subcultures.

Where members of fangdom and role-players treat vampirism and the culture that surrounds

it as a form of entertainment, others see it as a lifestyle. From the Latin for 'he who drinks blood', Sanguinarians, or 'sanguines' for short, usually see themselves as the only 'real' vampires. They are individuals with a compulsion or need to consume blood in order to replenish life-force energy and strength. Animal blood will sometimes suffice, but most sport a need for that from humans.

There's often a fair amount of overlap between the vampire lifestyler community and sadomasochism and blood fetishists, but sanguines typically don't drink blood to satisfy a sexual or emotional need. Instead, they often feel physically ill without blood consumption and define their condition as a genuine medical syndrome. However, although there are certain similarities between a classic description of a vampire and symptoms of porphyria, a congenital bone marrow disease that causes sufferers to crave blood, be sensitive to sunlight and have cartilage deformities, the two are thought to be completely different conditions. Understandably, many studies have been done around sanguinarians, but psychologists and researchers are yet to unearth any solid scientific evidence to support the notion that the needs of the community are genuine.

People fall into the vampire community a number of ways and for a number of reasons. Members of fangdom, role-players and scholars may be drawn in by what's on trend, a keen interest or just serendipitously while on the hunt for a new hobby. But things seem to be different for sanguinarians. Rather than curiosity or following a fad, they tend to learn about their own vampirism organically, realising what they are by catching themselves craving blood. For some, the need manifests before puberty, with people experiencing vampiric awakenings as early as pre-school age. For others, it happens over time. Triggers can be anything, like licking a wound for the first time, roughly kissing and drawing blood, or satisfying a craving to suck blood from a raw steak.

Due to the activities involved in being a true sanguinarian, the faction is often shamed by other members of the larger vampire community. Just the practice of drinking blood is seen as a taboo by many, what with it being very difficult to consume safely and without contracting a serious blood-borne disease like HIV, syphilis and hepatitis. Alongside that, there are also all the dangers that come with drawing blood without help from a licensed medical professional.

People who volunteer blood for vampires to drink are known in the community as 'black swans'

However, unlike many of the vampires depicted in mythology and fiction, who can often be found preying on unwitting victims in order to feed, a large portion of the sanguinarian community seek out volunteers for consensual blood donations and condemn violent behaviour. In doing so, they go to great lengths to make blood extraction as safe as possible, getting blood tested and limiting one blood donor to one monogamous relationship.

Recent studies have found that there are thousands of real-life vampires living all over the world

Otherkin identify as a range of mythical creatures, like demons, angels, dragons, elves and fairies

Real-life vampires and beyond

Vampires aren't the only people who don't identify entirely as human – introducing the otherkin community

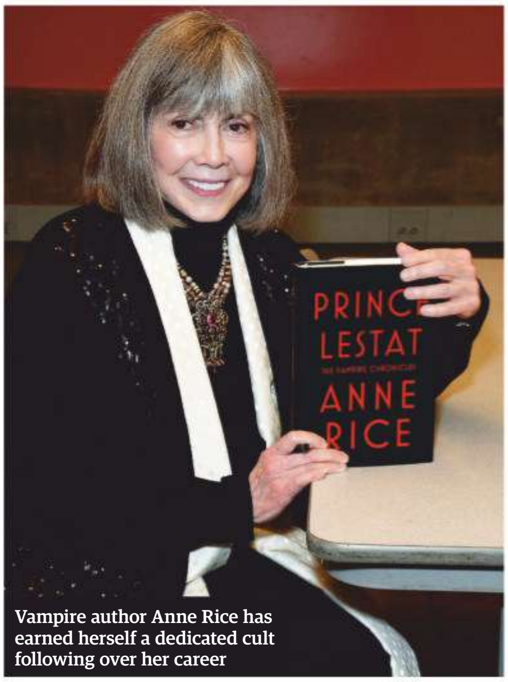
There are more things in Heaven and Earth that are dreamt of in most people's philosophy, and the otherkin community is proof. They may not fit entirely into most people's definition of magical, but their sense of self is certainly different from most people's.

'Otherkin' describes a subculture of people who socially and spiritually identify as not being human. Instead, they largely connect with the idea of mythical creatures from pop culture and legends, identifying as a wealth of different beings from angels and demons to aliens, elves, sprites and dragons. They usually find their identities through a strong belief in the existence of different parallel universes, and the existence of supernatural and sapient non-human beings within them.

Where vampirism grew from the goth subculture, otherkin rose from the online elven communities in the early to mid 1990s. There has not been much solid research into the science involved in being otherkin, but there are a number of different theories within the community. Some believe their identity is genetic, while others say that it is a result of reincarnation, ancestry, metaphor, or what is known as 'trans-species dysphoria of the soul'.

Much like the vampire community, otherkin largely exist in groups online; Elfkind Digest mailing list, the oldest internet resource, was first started in 1990 by a student from the University of Kentucky. With a wealth of online support and information now available, the community has been growing ever since.

Cosplayers show their love for fangdom by dressing up as their favourite vampiric characters



Vampire author Anne Rice has earned herself a dedicated cult following over her career

Commonly known as 'black swans', blood donors are often the friends and partners of sanguines, but in some cases they are merely willing vampire supporters who are sought out online and through the community.

Though most now deem human blood consumption as being, frankly, kind of gross, that wasn't the case back in the 16th and 17th centuries. Many people regularly drank the stuff, including physicians, priests and royals, because it was widely believed that it improved vigour. As a result, it was often ingested to cure headaches and ease the symptoms of more severe medical conditions like epilepsy. With advancements in medicine, the practice mostly died out, but there are still a number of people who drink blood for medical reasons, both physical, like genetic mutations and problems producing haemoglobin, and psychological. It hasn't been proven that the blood actually helps, but many feel healthier when they do.

> "Psychic vampires can be identified through traits like needing constant reassurance and never feeling satisfied"

Sanguines might be the only kinds of vampires who drink human blood nowadays, but they aren't the only ones who require sustenance from humans to draw strength. Another vampiric subculture that has been known to cause similar trouble, minus the blood part, is the psychic vampire community, which itself can be divided into two more separate categories: traditional psychic vampires and ethical psychic vampires.

As a group, psychic vampires, or 'psi-vamps', are a type of human vampire that believes they attain strength and nourishment from the psychic energy, pranic energy and the aura of others, with the reasoning being that this energy balances spiritual and psychological energy deficiencies in themselves, like damaged auras and chakras. Basically, they supposedly drain people of energy in order to top up their own supply.

Traditional psychic vampires are mostly unaware of their own energy-stealing activities and are therefore usually found outside of the vampire community. They drain others by way of their own personalities, being negative, demanding, angry and gloomy, asking non-stop questions and possessing other generally negative personality traits. Ethical psychic vampires, on the other hand, are human vampires that believe they have what they call 'energy deficiencies' due to their bodies not creating enough life-force like prana, chi and ki, and are therefore unable to maintain good physical, emotional and spiritual health without a little help. Like sanguines, they feed from consenting donors to top up their energy supplies.

Psychic vampires can be identified through traits like needing constant reassurance and never feeling satisfied. Symptoms of psychic vampire attacks, however, are a little more physical, and include effects like dizziness, chronic fatigue, muscle tension, headaches, irritability, a depressed mood, sleep disturbances, possessing a leaky or diminishing aura and more. If you start to experience any of these symptoms and suspect a psychic vampire might be to blame, there are plenty of online resources available that provide guidance about how to avoid a psychic vampire attack. Advice for avoiding psychic energy drains usually include being aware of which individuals cause your energy to deplete and limiting contact with them, invoking a protective bubble of white light surrounding your auric field, and carrying protective amulets as energy shields.

Vampire communities may mostly be visible online, but actual real-life gatherings akin to those in the likes of *True Blood* and *The Vampire Diaries* still exist, albeit with decidedly less drama. It is believed that around 5,000 vampires are living in the United States alone, with a fair few of them living in tribes in New Orleans, Louisiana and Buffalo, New York. Like any other lifestyle that deviates from the norm, vampirism often comes with ostracisation from those who don't understand it. Fearing discrimination, the community's sanguinarians and psychic vampires live discreetly in local vampire houses, often led by a vampire elder who guides new members into the group.

Though they usually keep to themselves, they still contribute to their communities outside of their fellow vampires, organising and participating in charity events in an attempt to give back to society. Modern vampires may not always fit outsider ideas of what they should be, but they are very much vampires They are not only still living – they're thriving.

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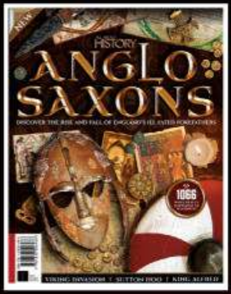
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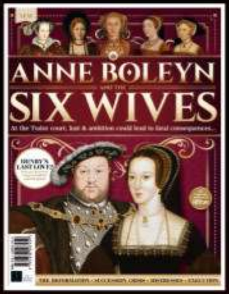
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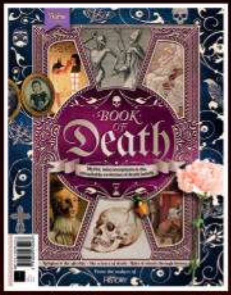
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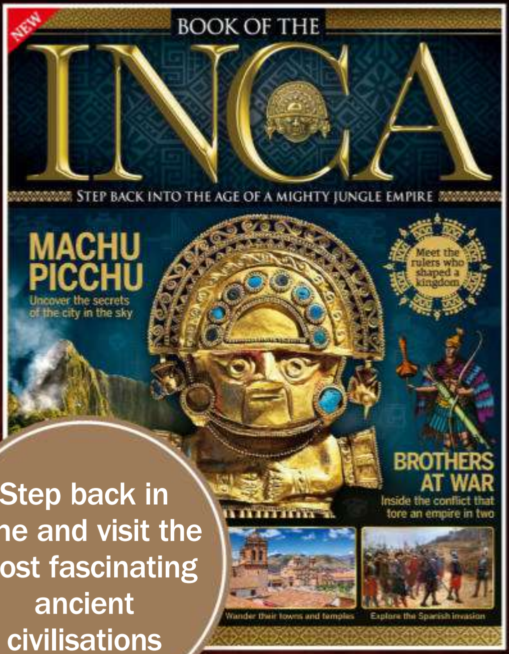
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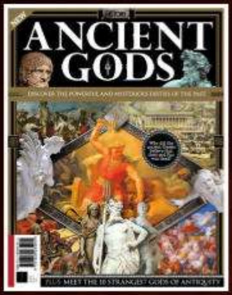
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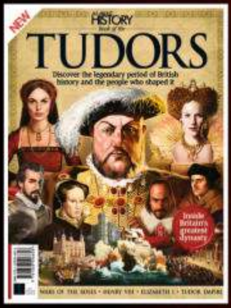
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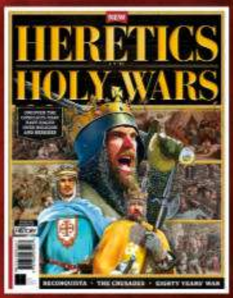
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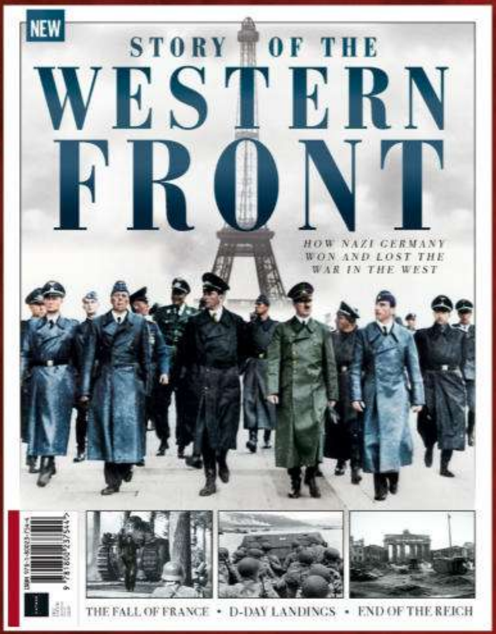
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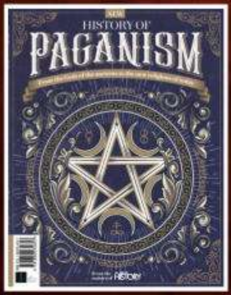
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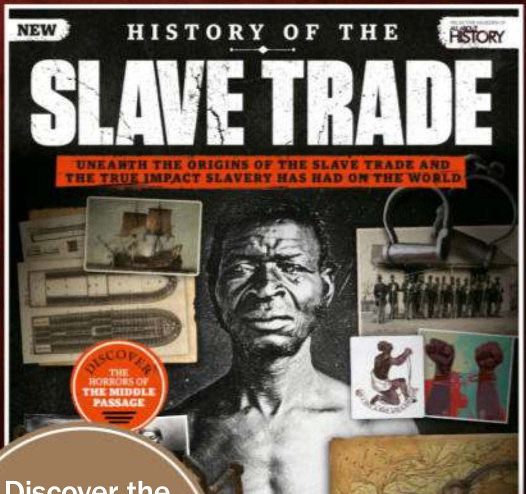
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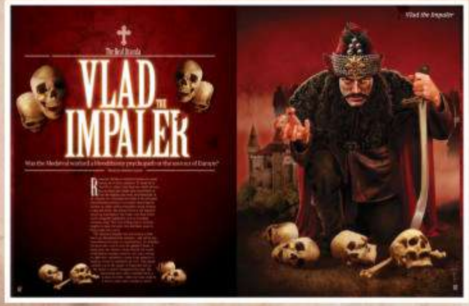

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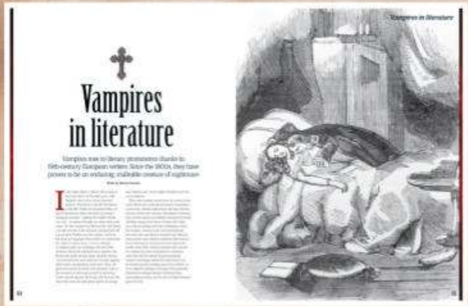

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